SELF-PORTRAIT OF YOUTH

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or

THE URBAN ADOLESCENT

by

G. W. JORDAN

AND

E. M. FISHER

With a Foreword by
PROFESSOR W. O. LESTER SMITH

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FOREWORD

by

W. O. LESTER SMITH, C.B.E.

Formerly Professor of Sociology of Education in the University of London

About Youth, Young People and Young Persons there are several recent surveys and studies, some of them of high merit. But this interesting, readable, lively book is not of that *genre*; it is an intimate, and very personal close-up of the vital young patrons of an Institute, of which they are as proud as the venerables who frequent the Atheneum or the denizens of Boodles are of their particular roost. The authors have taken the lid off, and enabled us to see this Institute from within, sense its intense human problems, and share awhile in its cultural and other activities. The book is a personal, genuine portrait of an Institute throbbing with vitality. The 'Grosvenor', is how they speak of it, and they would not dream of swapping its local habitation and its name for some more favoured regions across the main road. And this patriotism is infectious; spend an evening or two at the 'Grosvenor' and you will soon be saying that

Hearts just as pure and fair
Beat in St. —— Square
As in Belgravia.

And it won't be long before Belgravia, Park Lane or anywhere else are completely out of the running. For the young patrons of the 'Grosvenor', as kindly, understanding, put-you-at-your-ease hosts, are second to none. They have their standards of courtesy and are careful to observe them. And even when you are far away from them they remember you and keep you in touch by sending you their magazine, printed and published on the premises. In this and other pleasant ways accredited members of the 'Grosvenor' keep friendships forged there in constant repair.

This book is far too good to require a foreword to commend it, but the authors have pressed me to write one and it would be ungracious and ungrateful not to do so. For I owe a great debt

to them and all the good companions of the 'Grosvenor'; I cannot forget how cordially they made me welcome there and allowed me, as a guest, to share in their refreshing and heartening fellowship. It is a rare privilege, and I know no tonic that braces so immediately and effectively. One reason why I like this Institute so much is because, while leaving no doubt that you are truly welcome, your hosts waste no time over formalities. Indeed their zest is such that they are obviously determined to get all they can out of the well-arranged and varied programme of activities. But just once, I remember, they staged an item entirely for my benefit. They had heard me say that I would like to know what young people really wanted from modern society that they were not getting. So their star discussion group made it their 'topic for tonight', and after a long and vigorous debate gave their answer to my query. Emphatically and unanimously they resolved that what mattered to them above all else was the way they were treated by their employers and fellow-workers, and by grown-ups generally. If the spirit of goodwill and kindly fellowship that animates the 'Grosvenor' became normal practice everywhere and permeated human relations in the ordinary affairs of life, then—they were sure—the world would be a far far better place for the young citizens growing up. Besides, as a very practical young lady observed, it would cost 'them' nothing. Even so I could not help feeling that the pittance allocated to the Youth Service out of the national 'kitty' is a bit of a scandal.

Statistics and social surveys provide valuable documentary evidence of what is needed to provide a youth service worthy of this great nation, but when you have added up all their arithmetic it inevitably leaves the major issue untouched. For it is the spirit that quickeneth, the sense of really belonging, and of being thought somebody and not just a minute part of a vast machine. So many today, especially those brought up in an amorphous, highly urbanised locality, get that unpleasant feeling of not mattering to anybody:

I, a stranger and afraid in a world I have not made. I have often wondered whether somehow someone could capture the spirit of the 'Grosvenor'—as an example of one good antidote to frustration and deadening loneliness—and reveal its quality

and its significance in its own very special neighbourhood. I think Mr. Jordan and Miss Fisher have got as near to achieving this as it is possible to do. They have given us out of the wealth of their experience a readable and human book, one that will surprise many and shock quite a few, blind to the sticky problems that many young people encounter. It deserves to be widely read as the reviewers are fond of saying, and, if it is, it should help to stir the public conscience and reinforce the growing belief that the adult community today is not giving the rising generation a square deal. What has happened to all the enthusiasm that greeted the establishment of a national service of youth during the War, and welcomed so earnestly the provision for county colleges in the Education Act of 1944? Has it all evaporated? Is it not time that we stopped condemning modern youth, and began instead to criticise ourselves for our apathy, and utter failure to provide what we know would help these young folk through the crucial years of adolescence?

W. O. LESTER SMITH

Chapter One

BACKGROUND TO THE PORTRAIT

'Home is where you start from.'

T. S. ELIOT

In a book about adolescents it is best to begin with their parents. For, although the young are everybody's business, nothing, it would seem, can take the place of a good home. It is doubtful if anything can take the place of a bad or mediocre one.

The urban background, against which our characters grew up and lived, was mixed. Much of it was dreary: some of it was derelict: part of it had been re-planned and new housing schemes with modern blocks of model flats had been built. Alongside these showpieces of workers' housing were several strongly built though aesthetically inferior Victorian industrial housing schemes. There were many large houses that were well-built and had been converted or partly converted into flats where numerous families lived. Other families occupied old houses that had been requisitioned for their use by the local council as a temporary expedient. Conditions in these houses might be very bad indeed. Some of the streets were wide and dignified, others dark and sinister. The life in these streets was as mixed as the architecture and presented most of the temptations of a big city. Thus buildings and streets varied from dignity to squalor. What of the families who lived in them?

They also varied in descent, in outlook, in honesty and decency, and in security, both financial and emotional. The quality of the home atmosphere did not correspond to the standard of architecture in any marked degree. The Shelley family was an example of a good home indifferently housed. The Shelleys had eight children and they inhabited a first floor and basement flat in a street that had known better days. Each of the eight children in this happy family had its own annual birth-

day party and this custom of recognising each individual child indicates the general attitude and atmosphere of this home in which each member got his fair share of interest and attention. Mrs. Shelley was plump and full of kindness and Mr. Shelley's even-tempered fairness included other people's children with his own. He believed in education and in training, and with his encouragement one son had satisfactorily completed an apprenticeship in a skilled trade, another had passed his General Certificate of Education and was in a job with prospects, and a daughter had secured a place in a grammar school. He supervised not only their education but their hobbies and he was frequently present at their boxing training or concert rehearsals. His younger son was a promising boxer but his father confessed, 'He is like the rest of them. He thinks he can manage without regular training'. Mr. Shelley was frequently seen cycling to watch his sons play football or engage in athletics.

Despite this secure environment with kindly parental control and interest, Tom Shelley, the eldest son, had a period of instability after his first disappointment in a love affair. He had several blackouts and was under the doctor for some weeks. As no physical cause could be found, he was sent to a psychologist who thought it might take a very long time to discover the reason for these blackouts. Mrs. Shelley discovered the reason a few weeks later. She was sweeping vigorously with her long broom under the bath when she hit glass. It was, in fact, a bottle or rather several bottles that had contained rum. She could understand Tom's state of mind when that girl had let him down, but she'd 'give him blackouts . . .!'.

This was a home that gave security and encouragement to the Shelley children and their friends. We learned about many homes that were less happy and less secure although in some cases they were far better off financially. There was Angus whose parents were separated. He lived with his mother and seldom saw his father as the cost of the journey was too heavy. He was good at practically every activity he tackled but his zest for life suffered at times as the responsibility for his mother weighed upon him. An unhappy love affair undermined his confidence still further. He took his troubles to Mrs. Shelley.

Several girls we met were tossed about between separated

parents who abused each other to their children on every possible occasion. Others came from homes where both parents lived together in anything but amity, and scenes and strife were frequent. Pearl was the child of a broken home and she was constantly in need of reassurance and affection. Once she appeared at a dancing session when we had not seen her for some weeks. Asked if she had been ill she said, 'I have got anxiety neurosis. I am having treatment. Please excuse me while I have this dance—and then I will tell you all about it.' Owen was the child of a home where there was constant strife and yet he grew into a well-integrated person. In fact far deeper study needs to be given to the problem why some youngsters seem to survive the disadvantages of a broken or inharmonious home, whereas others, with an apparently more secure environment, fall by the way.

We had in our district an aristocracy of families in some of the older blocks of flats where their forbears had lived for several generations. It was here that much of the corporate and community spirit of the area was to be found. There had been an influx of Irish families after the First World War and a smaller influx of French, Belgian and Polish families came during and after the Second World War with a sprinkling of Negro, Indian, Maltese, German and Greek families. This mixed descent gave the population a certain vivid character and made it relatively easy to achieve a community that had real racial toleration. There was an equal variety in religion and the youngsters were tolerant in this matter also.

Just as significant, perhaps, was the variation in the degree of parental training given to these children. Some were seldom checked. Others were inconsistently disciplined, so that an action that would earn disfavour one day would pass unheeded the next. Others like the Shelley children were trained, watched, criticised and encouraged.

Despite this differentiation in ancestry, religion and early environment—many had grown up in rural surroundings before coming to our district—these children had a number of common tastes and habits. One was that they never stayed at home in the evening. In the Shelley family, and in many another large and happy household, it was not the custom for

the older youngsters to stay at home after tea. With a big family, the modern large all-purpose living room means mixing children of varying ages and interests and the adolescent can only pursue increasingly individual tastes and satisfy a growing desire for adult independence by going out. With the only child, the desire to be with his own age-group drives him out of the home at night. Had there been, in our area, no elementary form of further education, these youngsters would have roamed the streets or gone to the pictures every evening.

We had originally come to this district to undertake the job of providing informal education for large numbers of adolescents. We were responsible for the administration of an amorphous organisation with the comprehensive title of 'The Grosvenor Recreational Evening Institute'; we were the servants of the local education authority and the Institute was the official centre for informal education for the under-21 age-group in two large boroughs of London. During the evenings, and often during the daytime when the Institute was not officially in session, we dealt directly with these young people. In addition to running the headquarters and one branch in an adjacent borough, the work entailed attendance at youth committee meetings and at conferences of the many organisations dealing with the reception and welfare of young people.

The headquarters of the Institute consisted of a permanent office, equipped with a telephone, in a red brick school building of good proportions, three storeys high and some 35 years old. This building housed two schools by day (an infants' and a junior school) and the main part of the Grosvenor Institute by night. It is with this main part and its population that this book is mostly concerned.

The Institute was open five nights a week from 6.30 to 10 p.m. and shut at the weekends. Attendance on the part of the students was entirely voluntary. We were expected to get the youngsters off the streets and educate them in non-vocational subjects. Our experience in trying to carry out this directive without emptying the building was stimulating. To discover what the young will take, when they are free to leave if they do not like it, is often surprising and our experience should be valuable to those who work in educational institutions with a com-

pulsory attendance, where the pupils have no choice but to take what is given.

It is easy to attract young people off the streets into a warm building where they can meet their fellows in a friendly atmosphere. When we first came, the building was crowded with loungers and scroungers who seemed content to bring the street into the Institute; the street with its catcalls, its standing aimlessly about, its purposelessness, its boredom, its jeering ugly laughter at any new interest or serious effort. To get such a community to observe the simple and reasonable rule of the local authority seemed a well-nigh impossible task. This rule was that all who joined must attend one class per week in a subject other than ballroom dancing. In the beginning even members of the students' committee openly broke this rule. There were some in the Youth Service who said that regulations such as this were our real stumbling block, but we were not ready to assume that this was so. We decided to experiment and for that purpose we travelled with a notebook. In our diaries and notebooks are to be found jottings about the development of a large number of young persons between the ages of 14 and 21. Some were observed continuously; in the case of others, there was a period of service in the Forces when we only saw them on leave.

Our notes record the changes in individuals as well as some of their more abiding characteristics. From them we are led to see adolescence as a process of development rather than a static condition. We see youngster after youngster go through periods of emotional turmoil and educational ferment. Some took longer than others to regain control. Temporary maladjustment being general, we were led to ask why some did not recover. There were two brothers in our community. The elder went through his grammar school, passing his examinations with ease and winning athletic laurels. The younger left the same school at 15 having passed no examinations. He had convinced the staff that he could do no good by remaining at school. He drifted from job to job. Neither at school nor at work did he use the intelligence, equal to his brother's, that tests had shown him to possess. Eventually his ungovernable temper landed him in the police court. This is one example of the questions posed by a scrutiny of our notes. It seems useful to present to a wider public these

sketches of young people growing up. They give a slightly altered emphasis from the method of the questionnaire or the social survey. All the experiments described were part of an attempt to achieve a simple aim: to find out what the present generation of adolescents are really like with a view to educating them.

Of the two workers who attempted this, G. W. Jordan was principal of the Grosvenor Institute. He had had long experience of dealing with tough types of boy and man, as he had been appointed principal of an evening institute in London in his early twenties. Thus when he returned to work as principal of the Grosvenor in 1947 after five years' absence on active service, some of it as a prisoner of the Japanese, he was anything but a novice. Time for reflection in company with men in extremity had raised in his mind fundamental questions of educational technique. He had discovered that men in desperate situations have a lively curiosity and a keen desire for knowledge, as well as humour and fortitude. These men, cut off in Java, were only our adolescents at a few years' remove. If they, living under stringent circumstances, needed cultural satisfaction, the same need must exist in their younger contemporaries. He set himself to make this need felt among urban adolescents living in an era of mechanised amusements. At an early camp he acquired the nickname of 'the Baron', and it will be convenient to refer to him by that name in the following pages.

His assistant, E. M. Fisher, came to work in the Grosvenor shortly after his return. Her work was officially part-time. At first she combined it with editorial work, and at times with part-time day teaching. She staked a good deal on an indirect and personal method in education both for arousing interest in the adolescent and for detecting latent interest—this meant watching the individuals for the least sign of cultural interest and encouraging further development. The method entailed dealing with each individual rather than preaching culture to a larger group. As she was so frequently left in charge of the Grosvenor while the Baron had to be elsewhere, she will be referred to in this book as 'the Steward'.

Thus a highly skilled and experienced, though dissatisfied, man with an obstinate respect for his administrative instructions, set out to review his methods with the help of an assistant,

who had a good deal of theoretical knowledge and less experience in the field. Their first step seemed to be to get the crowds that hung about the stairs and corridors doing something constructive; the next, to get to know as many as possible of the Institute population well enough to find out what interested them at present.

It did not take long to discover that the young cannot be studied without their co-operation and consent. We took an arbitrarily selected group into our confidence, confessed to them that we knew hardly anything about them or their friends, and invited them both to observe the behaviour of their contemporaries and to report on themselves. With the help of this group we were shown many of the facets of adolescent life usually withheld from adults. Their recorded conversations enable a section of modern youth, that is usually condemned to be inarticulate, to speak for itself.

Working as we did in our permanent office during the sessions of the day-schools (both junior and infants' departments) we met the younger brothers and sisters of our students. The teachers in this junior school gave us many a useful comment on the families of our members, for they had actually taught those who had later joined the Grosvenor. Pearl was a case in point. Mr. Byrd, the headmaster of this school, seemed to have created a zest for work among his scholars. The school had a free and happy atmosphere; yet freedom was no excuse for neglecting purposeful activity and the acquirement of basic skills. During class hours the children really concentrated on their work with a joyful intensity. The more brilliant were worked to a reasonable capacity and the more halting were encouraged and were also expected to produce their quota. Lessons ended and play begun; the place became, to the casual observer, a riot. It was noisy, friendly, boisterous. Staff and pupils had achieved a joint understanding of 'work' and 'play'.

Our members, many of them elder brothers and sisters of these juniors, had lost in some degree the basic skills they once mastered at this school. We were assured by the staff that they in their time had been as vitally interested in all that was put before them as their younger siblings to-day. When, where and how had this sparkling interest been lost? Did the wastage begin

after they graduated from the junior to the secondary modern school? Was it the effect of their entry into employment? Or was it inevitable that the majority of young people should become apathetic at puberty?

We had no daily contact with any secondary modern school although the Steward had such contact over some years with a technical school. Fortunately we were able to discuss educational problems with the heads of many secondary modern and grammar schools. We drew our students from schools run along widely differing lines. Some had an authoritarian organisation; some were slightly freer; some had little discipline; some had a high standard of behaviour and work. Superficially the end products of all these types of school seemed surprisingly similar. The Baron was in touch with one school run on very free lines indeed with self-government for students. He attended several annual summer outings of this school as well as being an accepted casual visitor. He found among its pupils the same cultural apathy that we had to try to overcome in our early days at the Grosvenor. The findings of the Steward in an 'authoritarian' school were similar.

Many of our students may, through the degree of their illiteracy, cast unfavourable reflections on the educational standards and teaching skill of the schools they had attended. But, in judging schools and products, we have also to remember that in an environment where reading and writing are not part of the daily round, and where there are no well-stocked book-shelves and no encouragement to write, skills may be lost. A school-leaver who is poor at spelling and an apathetic reader may rapidly lose ground. Arthur was a case in point. One evening when he had come to the Institute after his day's work as a lorry driver's mate, he told us, 'I have hardly written a thing since I left school. To-day I borrowed a pencil and a bit of paper and I wrote down my name and address to see if I still remembered how to write.' A scrutiny of our completed membership forms would have revealed the number of those who had forgotten how to spell even their own address.

The office was the focal point of the Grosvenor. In it were kept keys to stockrooms and cupboards, instructors' registers, time books, files for sports and social activities, the typewriter,

first aid equipment, reference books and directories, gramophone records, pencils and paper and the many necessities for a varied programme.

Through the ever open door of the office all students were welcomed and many visitors, some of them distinguished in their fields of work, were admitted. This open door had one drawback. Those who attempted to do our clerical work, while the Institute was in session, found the constant interruption distracting. Wilfred, the editor of our first wall magazine, illustrates their predicament. He wanted to write a letter to tell a girl that he wished to dismiss her from her position as his special girl friend. He said to the Steward, 'Can you find me some quieter room to write this letter in? The office is far too disturbing.' Eventually we found a secretary who consented to work by day when the youngsters were not there. We ourselves became accustomed to taking notes of the lively life that went on around us.

Looking through past diaries has been a constantly revealing process. At times a boy or girl would react in almost the same way to a set of circumstances year after year. Other records show how fleeting are many adolescent tastes, crazes and interests. Until a large number of adolescents have been observed growing up over a number of years, we are apt to forget the strange compound of enduring characteristics and fleeting attitudes and affections that make up one healthy youngster. The interesting results often obtained by the use of questionnaires or by social survey interviewers to discover aspects of adolescence ignore one factor. The information thus collected is of the still moment and cannot reflect the constant change, the procession of moments that alter individual adolescents within a space of months, days or even hours. There is the case of one boy who in a discussion group said firmly, 'I am not one to look for trouble,' and soon after involved himself, and nearly involved the Grosvenor, in a fight with a razor-slashing gang. We were often to meet these simple statements that were seen to be contradicted by events with an almost dramatic irony. It seems probable that the adolescent makes such remarks to reassure himself when he is battling with conflicting impulses and desires, just as older people, as well as young, ask for advice and seldom take it.

It very often happened that a boy or a girl would say firmly that they did not intend to have any serious love affairs until they were 21, or some such age, and then the very next week they would start a lasting romance. All that people say has a meaning, even their contradictory assertions, if they are taken as part of the whole pattern of their behaviour, but the meaning may be far from the obvious one. Edgar, a senior member, explained that he could not enjoy discussion with his father, because his father lost his temper if Edgar disagreed with him or said something inconsistent with a previous statement. Edgar explained, 'He won't realise that you don't always agree yourself with what you say. You take a line in an argument to try it out. You learn that way.' Seen from this angle, contradictory behaviour appears to have a purpose, and may help towards some larger harmony in the development of youth.

A few extracts from the diaries illustrate the life in the Grosvenor. The first is from that of the Baron. 'Marion came in to the office to ask if I would like a cup of tea. Had just had one but she looked so disappointed that I asked her to get me another. Told her I thought her new make-up the right colour but that she needed to use a little less on her face. While she was fetching the tea Cedric came in, full of the evening institutes' football meeting which he had just attended. He said that he and the other Grosvenor representative had had to say a good deal, as few of the other delegates said anything at all. Evan, who had been to a Judo meeting, said the same thing happened there, where delegates grumbled afterwards but said nothing when they had the chance. Robert, who arrived while Evan was talking, said he had just been at a Council of Youth meeting and that was just as bad.

'Catherine interrupted his speech to say she was bored stiff, as Don her boy-friend was in Scotland for ten days in connection with his job. Could I find her something useful to do? When I said that it must be interesting for Don to travel she agreed, but said she found it dull without him (she was just 16 at the time). I gave her a cupboard to turn out and it was willingly done. Guy came in to ask where he could find a boot-repairing class. I said there was one at the Crescent, but he did not relish the idea of going over there for one night a week, and said it would be a

good idea if we had an odd jobs room at the Grosvenor where all sorts of people could do various repair work. Wilfred came in, furious because the local paper had not printed his sports report on last week's football match. He said this was the second time this had happened, and the Steward said she would go and see the editor as, until recently, we had been very generously treated as to space. Wilfred and Cedric sat at a desk and started to compose a report of the last match. Desmond helped for a time, and then he went to telephone about some indoor games fixtures (he was secretary for indoor games). A young boy came in and just stood for a while; then he asked plaintively were there no darts available. Desmond found him some and said, "You've only got to ask."

'Catherine emerged from her cupboard and coyly picked up her diary which she had left on the table, saying she hoped no one had read it. Kit, aged 14, said that whether to keep a diary or not might make a subject for discussion. He then noticed a recorder that I had bought as a present for a niece, and asked could he try it. When encouraged to do so he played the music on the "self-help" sheet, saying he should try it again tomorrow, and daily, if I would leave the instrument there. Vicki and Loretta (15 years at this time) came in and seated themselves behind my chair, quietly talking about a boy. Sarah and a friend looked in to say "hullo" and went off. This is a busy evening typical of this week. Games rooms full; canteen full, with a hum of conversation; everyone everywhere animated but not noisy; few, outside classes or the office, seem purposefully employed. Marion was helping Miss Reeves wash up while there was a rush in the canteen. It is strange to reflect how this happy scene might, in a minute, be transformed if a girl let out a scream or a boy came along in a mood.'

The Steward's diary contained many notes of times when this happy social scene did change in a flash. Here is one such:

'A crowd here as always on a Wednesday. Mrs. Joane Edmunds came to give a lecture on "Making the most of oneself". There was considerable excitement that the expert who trained so many beauty specialists should be coming to talk at the Grosvenor. The Baron afterwards reported that this lecturer had a knack of judging character from facial idiosyncracies and

general appearance, and suggested that her summing up from a face and bearing might have validity.

'While the lecture was in progress Cuthbert was conducting a party of visitors from a youth club round the Grosvenor. He had asked some six of our tap-dancers to give a demonstration and these girls, including Marion who is secretary of the group, were standing near the hall and waiting to demonstrate, and ready even to forgo the lecture on how to be beautiful, for this purpose. The hall where they wanted to dance was being used for football training and they were most unpopular with the footballers, who did not want to wait while some girls "showed off". As soon as football was over ballroom dancing practice was to begin, and a few early dancers were equally discouraging to the tap-dancers. Cuthbert was about to give up the unequal struggle when the Baron emerged from the lecture, and seeing the dismay of Marion and Co. he stopped the ballroom dancing while they gave their demonstration. Leaving things to adolescents to manage is like that. They manage very well until a crisis, and then they are liable to give way to mass pressure and so disappoint a minority. It is important that no group that has worked to an end should be disappointed, or it may make them work with less interest.

'Visitors from a neighbouring settlement were at the lecture. With the place full of visitors, with frequent calls on the telephone and constant demands for equipment, it was well into the evening before I could get into the clay modelling class to see how they were working. I had looked through the door several times in passing and they had on each occasion appeared to be quietly intent on their work. When I did get into the room the class had apparently gone berserk. Alastair, who was one of our best modellers, was there with his brother, together with Mike and Guy. The two brothers were irritated with each other, and they hurled abuse from opposite ends of the room, as they were seated well apart. Then Mike and Alastair quarrelled, and the latter intentionally broke a model that Mike has made with great care. They both are very interested in making Egyptian models, or copies of Egyptian sculpture. As both are good at their work they are, no doubt, jealous of one another. Suddenly they all began to hurl clay at Guy. Many of those who seem to

take to clay modelling are problem children and there is a lot of jealousy among them; models have to be kept under lock and key or they get wantonly destroyed or spitefully smashed. Is breaking up a best friend's model equivalent to biting one's pencil or banging a door to let off steam, and how far should one let the breaking up go as a relief of tension?'

A few days later a chance meeting with Alastair's mother is recorded in the Steward's diary and this sheds some light on the matter.

'Mrs. —— met me on corner of street; she said her husband had been angry with Alastair, as her other son had told his father Alastair had been rude to the Steward . . . I said it would be better if the two boys did not tell tales about each other to their father; I added that it was better for Alastair to be aggravating in the Institute than to bottle up his anger until he was in the sort of state when he would get into trouble with the police. Mrs. —— said it was a pity that her husband favoured the younger son. I said Alastair and his father seemed to have the same violent temper. Mrs. —— said her husband had once bought some nylons for his daughter; later that evening Helen, Alastair's sister, contradicted her father. In a rage he took the new nylons and threw them in the fire.'

Alastair was one of the more difficult boys with whom we were concerned. He could be bitter and spiteful and malicious but at times any adult would have envied his powers of concentration on a clay model or arranging a stage for a play. There was about him a pathetic quality and a perceptiveness and taste rare in one so young.

Guy, who had been one of the combatants in the battle of the clay, was tall and good-looking. His mother had separated from his father and then married again and Guy had taken the name of her next husband. This second marriage had broken up and, during the Second World War, he and his mother had been on their own for a few years. Then she had married again and there were two small children by this marriage. The advent of this second family made it difficult for Guy, and also for his mother, as his stepfather had not much patience with a difficult adolescent boy who was jealous of him and who seemed to reject rudely all invitations to go out with the rest of the family. Guy

refused these invitations because there was no one of his own age in the family party but he did not bother to explain this. Yet he was genuinely fond of his mother and of the young babies. When the second baby was coming, his mother asked him to be ready to take the older child to stay with a relative when she had to go off to the maternity hospital. This was treating him as an adult and he thrived on such treatment. He felt important and necessary at this time and his general behaviour at the Grosvenor improved. He was always, at his most intractable, a likeable villain. Once he asked the Steward if it would be possible to trace his real father. He had his name written down on a crumpled bit of paper, together with an address which was very much out of date.

These are two of the four boys who suddenly changed the happy atmosphere of the Grosvenor one evening. Other characters were more purposefully occupied, such as Cuthbert, who was doing the honours of the place for a group of visitors. He was a squarely built young man who had just finished his army service and he was intelligent and gifted at many pursuits. His first clay model of a nude athlete was one of the best we ever had and in a discussion on psychical phenomena he made some of the most thoughtful comments. He was an inventive showman and had many useful suggestions to make regarding displays and exhibitions. Yet if he was asked to make a few notes, he was entirely nonplussed.

Then there is Marion, waiting anxiously for over half an hour with her tap-shoes on, to give her demonstration. She was a tall girl for her 14 years, with pretty curling hair and large dark eyes which she already knew how to use to advantage when there were boys around. She was illegitimate and she had lived in a home for three years. Her mother had a succession of men benefactors and she had decided to have Marion home to live with her and to let her attend a local school for her last few terms of school life. It was not long before her mother quarrelled with her about her boy friends, saying she would have plenty of time for boys when she was 18. But Marion said, 'I may be dead before I am 18. I have lost all those years away in the country. I must make up for lost time and get to know some boys now.' We noticed in her, as in many girls, a sexual urgency soon after

puberty coupled with a great many attractive qualities and a rare honesty in speech and thought.

Cedric, whom we meet in this extract from the diary, was a likeable person and one of our most difficult and persistent problems for some years.

Evan was distinguished in Judo before we came to the Grosvenor; he left to do his army service soon after our arrival so that he grew up under a previous regime. After army service, he regularly attended the Institute under our organisation. He was the only son of a widowed mother whom he had to support. His was an open mind with many interests. Alf Morton had been a formative influence in his life as his Judo instructor and general mentor. During his latter term at the Grosvenor Evan showed a surprising maturity coupled at times with sudden youthful enthusiasms which seemed slightly incongruous. On a certain occasion when he was 20 and a stern critic of certain rowdy 15-year-olds, he suddenly asked the Steward to get him a small length of fur cloth as he wished to make himself some bearskin bathing drawers. She got him something more like leopard skin and he cut out a paper pattern that made insufficient allowance for curves. Soon he had organised a team of girls to machine this garment which, from an older point of view, assumed an importance out of all proportion to its use. This incident is typical of this whole age-group; they are creatures of independence and resource, who want to be given responsibility and to advise their elders, and then suddenly they revert to a more childish enthusiasm. Perhaps in saying that, we describe their elders too. Eventually Evan met a Welsh girl on a holiday. Their friendship lasted and he bought a motor cycle and regularly visited her until he took a job in her town and married her. In this he and Cedric were alike; in 1952 Cedric went to work in Wales and became engaged to a charming Welsh girl whom he married.

Before the Baron arrived on the scene Alf Morton had been in the habit of running a students' committee. He continued this for our first session and held a rather noisy election for its membership by a show of hands. The resulting committee was not entirely successful. Most of the energy of its members was dissipated by disorderly internal discussions and several of them

tended to 'throw their weight about' in the Institute. Those not elected took the comfortable view that the care of equipment and the successful running of the Grosvenor was the responsibility of the committee and no concern of theirs.

The Baron was in favour of committees as a form of practical education in citizenship and he had written a memorandum on the subject of their use in informal education. When ours proved less effective than he had hoped, he at first took the view that we should overhaul our methods of running them. But subsequent experience with general committees raised doubts of their effectiveness at this stage in education. Those responsible for the Peckham Health Experiment concluded that committees could be disruptive, and our experience seemed to confirm that conclusion. We continued to have some committees for special activities such as football clubs and later, when a cycling club was started, it had a committee that paid great attention to procedure. This cycling club was one of the few Grosvenor activities that tended to be run by a clique. They were a very pleasant set of people but nevertheless they were a clique.

Very often when we started a new activity the right person for the job would come along and be invited to undertake it. This happened with the *Grosvenor Gazette*, our Institute journal. Where possible we tried to spread all our activities widely and not let too much of the responsibility rest with a few super-public-spirited members. Everyone needs to learn through having some responsibility and being asked to contribute in ways that their abilities suggest. But it needs an understanding adult to see that everyone is asked and expected to contribute. We grew to think that, between the ages of 14 and 21, power over near contemporaries can be a bad thing. Fights and quarrels and general pandemonium seemed to ensue when one member tried to boss the others. Many times in the following pages we shall note a tendency of the young to be harder on each other than any adult would dare to be; we shall see them accepting responsibility as adults and then forgetting they are no longer children.

On one occasion just before a weekend camp Robert who was then 17, and some of his friends, volunteered to act as 'policemen' to see that the younger members of the party which would

arrive at the camp site late on the Friday night, kept quiet and did not disturb neighbours. This offer was accepted. When the party did arrive, Robert and his friends helped to preserve a certain hush for some time and then quite suddenly he let out a delighted war whoop and did a succession of backward somersaults on the grass.

Tom Shelley was another would-be rigid disciplinarian and he was very stern indeed with those who cut rehearsals of his Glee Club. He himself had a great deal of 'temperament' and we made due allowance for it but he was unwilling to be so forbearing with anyone else. There was one particular girl who was to act a part in a competition play. At a certain rehearsal she was in a really aggravating mood. He was so stern with her that she said she would not act the part and he said, 'Very well, he would read her part from the script and be far funnier than she could ever be.' The Steward thought otherwise and called the girl into the office to discuss the difficulty. At a crucial moment in the discussion behind a closed door, Tom's voice could be heard in the passage outside saying, 'All this trouble over one bleeding girl. Next time we will have an all-male cast, and save worry.' Even this threat, if put into practice, would have been no solution as male singers at times refused to toe the line. There was an occasion when the Steward was fetched because Tom wished to exclude all but four members from the class.

No sketch of the Grosvenor would be complete without some mention of our early improvised efforts to find out what were the interests of the general run of our members. As an attempt to let them know that the curriculum was run for their benefit, a questionnaire was drawn up giving a list of all the subjects we already had together with all the other subjects permissible at this sort of evening institute. We got about 100 of our members to indicate on this questionnaire those subjects they would like offered in our next year's programme. The questionnaire mentioned the minimum rule of one class per week and the rule that ballroom dancing did not count as this one class. A further questionnaire was drawn up giving a list of possible subjects for occasional lectures. A choice of three had to be made in order of preference and this questionnaire also was filled in by over 100

students. Then as a rough check, a young and lively member of staff was asked to interview students on various nights and to collect suggestions and complaints about the running of the Grosvenor. She got a rich harvest of critical comments from Robert who liked her and wished to make an impression by having plenty to say.

The analysis of the replies to these questionnaires and interviews was enlightening. There was a steady demand for those subjects that we already provided as well as certain new demands for drawing and painting and for music. We later found that the young lack the wide experience enabling them to suggest creative new courses of study. It appeared that discussion and argument about music had made certain people want to know more. Furthermore, the radio made it possible for all to hear most types of music, so that music was a part of the environment. With painting, all had done art at school and many had gifts in this direction; and seeing pictures carefully picked to put on the walls of the office and in the class rooms, watching the very interesting selection of pictures chosen by Mr. Byrd for the day school, and reading books on art left about by the Steward, may have made a small nucleus realise the possibilities of the subject.

The programme for 1948–49 was fixed in accordance with the preferences shown by students, and its reception was watched with interest. One odd fact emerged. Very few of those members who had indicated a wish to hear a particular lecture, by naming it as one of their three first choices in the list, did, in fact, attend this particular lecture when arranged. In certain cases the day and time of the lecture clashed with some other regular chosen activity, but not always. Yet despite this discrepancy between choice and attendance, the choice of subjects had expressed a general trend in taste, and those subjects high up on the list of preferences, such as sex, psychical phenomena, the stars, local history, you and the law, men's dress, my life as a bus driver, did attract a good audience. Similarly with the choice of additions to the programme; few who had voted for art and music as new activities did attend the classes when formed, but both activities became increasingly popular.

Having fixed a programme and found plenty for the purposeful to do, we had next to find ways of inducing the less purpose-

ful, who only wished to stand around and do nothing but gamble or chase the opposite sex, to find wider interests. Some of these had some zest for sport and games, and a friendly and co-operative social attitude, but no intellectual interest or wish to apply themselves with sustained effort to acquiring any skills.

There were some who seemed only content to drift. How to lead them from this level to a more constructive one was our first task. We were appalled by the thought of all that they were missing in their present way of life, but we were also amazed at their vitality, their often ready wit and their capacity for loyalty. For with their noisy ebullience, their apathy and their severe criticism of all that was planned for them, they very soon convinced us that here was rich human material.

Chapter Two

JUDGEMENT ON ADULTS

'Know thyself'
From the Greek

The need to build up a community and to inspire its members with a respect for skill and knowledge naturally focussed attention on the sort of staff that would be best fitted to undertake the task. All our staff were casual labour, employed on a seasonal or termly basis to take one class per evening on one or several evenings of the week. The Steward was employed five evenings a week to supervise educational activities. We were also granted the services of a sports organiser at first for three and later for five evenings per week. We thus had a staff who visited once or twice a week to take some specific subject and a few persons who came each evening.

At all stages of our work we were concerned with the importance of having the best staff possible. If we were to find out just what would interest the young, we also needed to know the sort of person who would be acceptable to them. From our own point of view as educationalists we would require our staff to have good technical or academic qualifications. Judging from those who succeeded and those who failed with the youngsters, it became apparent that skill in a particular field, though essential, was in itself not enough.

It was at this point that we consulted Peter Kuenstler and other research workers. We found that research into the type of person best suited to informal educational work with adolescents had not yet reached a stage where concrete conclusions could be drawn. We therefore decided to leave the authorities to continue their investigations and to see what the young had to say for themselves in this matter.

We first started an enquiry among those still at school. We

were able, through the co-operation of many school authorities and teachers, to set an essay on 'The Sort of Person I like Best' to classes of boys and girls in most types of school; a London junior mixed school and similar schools in country towns, a rural school, secondary modern schools in London and provincial towns, grammar schools, technical colleges, a boys' public school and a temporary class run to educate a group of girls acting in a Christmas pantomime. We had over 300 essays on this subject together with a sample of essays on 'The Sort of Person I Dislike'. Quotations from these essays, all of which were refreshingly frank, will delight the reader out for truth and upset the adult out for gratitude.

One boy of 13 wrote, 'The thing I dislike about grown-up people is that most cannot understand a child's own mind. Some people buy their children fruit and others seem to think it is a waste of money. I dislike people who buy things for themselves and not for the younger people who want them as bad as they do.'

In many essays we note 15-year-olds resenting utter dependence on adults, especially in the matter of money, though not always in material ways only. One boy of 15 disliked the moods of grown-up people whereby conduct that pleased them in one mood annoyed them in another. He explained, 'I like grown-ups who have always the same temperament.'

A girl of 15 raised a similar point when she wrote, 'What I dislike about most grown-up people is that they don't remember that they were once young themselves; for instance some say you are late for so and so, or you should not do certain things that you yourself like doing, and therefore you must be punished. I know not all grown-ups are like this but I think the majority are. Some adults say that when they were young they had to have certain things which were cheap and so must we. They don't see that times have changed since they were children. Perhaps a mother is a well-educated person; of course she tries to make her child be the same, which is correct in a way, but you can't make a child learn things which it doesn't want to. Say a mother was a good dressmaker and her daughter very poor at this subject and good at art. If the mother made her do dressmaking instead of what she really wants to do herself she will spoil the whole life of her child.'

Another girl of 13 wrote, 'I dislike grown-ups who keep grumbling about the least little thing. I am not saying every adult does but there are some people in this world who do. Another thing is, adults would get on much better with each other if they were not so unsociable to neighbours and relations.'

One secondary modern schoolgirl, and one public schoolboy of 16, did not like the type of adult who ignored them. The boy wrote, 'If I am introduced to a man whom my father knows, it would be out of place for him to shake hands with me, and just that. He would be very unsociable if he did do just that. He would appeal to me, and I would feel more comfortable, if he spoke to me and asked a few questions. I think the other sort are too superior.' The girl expressed similar sentiments when she wrote, 'Some adults won't allow you in the room when they have visitors. They talk about things that are not interesting such as husbands and houses.'

A girl of 13 expressed her appreciation of the person who does not brush the young aside in hasty impatience to get on with other business, when she wrote, 'I like a person who is never in a hurry and is always friendly and ready to talk to anyone rich or poor.' Another girl of 15 said she liked grown-ups who 'laugh at your jokes'.

A boy of 15 said of adults, 'You can enjoy yourself with them in a different way to which you enjoy yourself with children.' A boy of 15, and a great many others, said in different words, 'They can also give you knowledge.' Another boy expressed this, 'They know more things. They generally like children and they can learn you things; they was born before you and can tell you more. Some are nice to you.'

Girls expressed more wayward likes and dislikes; one objected to men with moustaches as it made them look 'sly'. Several girls liked people because they felt 'sorry for' them. One girl disliked those who laughed at cripples. A great many boys disliked those who thought they knew everything; boys and girls both disliked 'bossy' people. One boy of 15 said of a woman, 'She likes too much church and makes you go too.' Another boy disliked someone because 'he never admits he is wrong'. Another liked a person 'who can take a joke against himself; there are not many who can'. One boy of 13 said he did not like persons who sulked,

adding, 'Some people can be very nasty when they want to. A lot of people are vain and proud.'

It was a girl who disliked people who 'were jealous in their ways', and another girl aged 13 said, 'I don't like people who are only friends with me when I have something that they haven't got.' A boy of 14 confessed, 'The sort of person I like is one who shares all his sweets and is not greedy. I like the sort of person who has a good character.' A boy wrote, 'A person who is not very tidy can be very nice.' It was a girl who noted, 'There are not so many people about who are both attractive and thoughtful.' Another girl said, 'It is not their good looks and clothes but their ways inside their mind that matter.' And a girl of 13 offered some pragmatic advice saying, 'If you are well-behaved you are liked: naughty people are not liked very much.' A girl of 15, writing of a woman she admired, said, 'I like a well-mannered person who is kind to all sorts of animals. She has a charming way of getting round people. She has a mystery about her and is always springing surprises on you.' Several essays referred to the joy to be got from 'surprises' and from outings with grown-ups. A boy of 15 disliked those who 'cannot keep their promises'.

A 13-year-old boy began his essay, 'I like somebody who is always ready for a laugh. I'm not like some people who says "I like people with blue eyes and curly hair". I think it does not matter what they look like; it depends on whether they are good at heart. Somebody you can trust and rely on. The main thing that goes on these days is selfishness.'

In many of the junior children's essays admiration is expressed for the adult who does not spoil children, but can be trusted and relied on. A girl of 10 wrote of her father, 'He is kind to me and I like him very much. When I ask him for anything, if he thinks it will do me good he gives it to me, but if not he says "No". He is kind to me so I try to be kind to him. . . . He gives me 1s. 6d. each week to spend and sometimes a little extra for sweets and ice cream. The only thing he does not take me to is the pictures but I don't mind. . . . At the end of the month if he has got any sweet coupons in his book he gives me the money and the points to get them for him. When I give him the sweets he takes one or two and gives the rest to me.'

A boy aged 9 wrote that he liked his aunt, 'because of her ways . . . when I go down to her kitchen always I find a lot of pastry on the table. When I go into the front room she always makes a comfortable seat for me. Then when I ask her if I can go for a ride on the bicycle she would let me. When we go for a picnic she would give us a fair share each and not one would have more than anyone else, she would see to that.' We had found this popular with our members at camp. If food and fatigues were fairly shared, all was well.

There was one frank and sad essay from a girl of 11 which read, 'I do not like my mother because she used to take me to her mother's house without telling my father. She had ginger hair and blue eyes. She does not live with us now. She had very nice hair and everybody liked it. My mother was lazy and used to lie in bed all day. She did not cook me any dinner but gave me pennies to go round the fish and chip shop to buy some chips. My mother did not properly dry my clothes and I used to go to school in wet jumpers. I am glad my mother does not live with me now. She was very clean and healthy and well clothed. I didn't have any sweets because she would usually eat them before I could even see them. My father gave her money to buy a birthday present for me, but she used to buy cigarettes with it. She had a very bad temper when anyone was rude to her.'

These essays are endlessly quotable: the children have a relentless candour in describing the impact of the well-meaning or the selfish adult upon them. Many other essays describe adults like the aunt who shared everything fairly, and the jovial sort that 'laugh at your jokes'. Several of the public schoolboys liked adults who were happily married, and kindness to wives was mentioned as a virtue. The discomfort that can be caused by a broken home was realised by children in all circles.

These essays were carefully analysed in an attempt to discover if there were common factors in the judgements passed on adults by children of 8–18 in all these types of school. A surprising unanimity of fundamental taste was found, with variations of emphasis according to age. Some 50 per cent of the junior schoolchildren described their contemporaries as the persons they liked best, and the other half described an adult. Very few of those of 15 and upwards described a contemporary. The master

who set the essay in the public school asked them to bear in mind the sort of person they would regard as most suitable to run a youth centre. This may have increased the emphasis put on authority and firmness which came first, and on prowess at sports which came second; three qualities which tied for third place were a jovial outlook, ideas and an interesting mind, and intelligence. Their next highest vote went to a good organiser and nearly as many votes to generosity and to the man with a happy home life. Sentimental people were unpopular and an even temper was praised.

The conception of generosity differed with age. Those of 9–11 years tended to illustrate what they meant by generosity as the giving of sweets and pocket money or the sharing of toys. It was for them a material quality, the giving to the dependent child of necessities and treats. By those of 15 years old and upward generosity was thought of rather as a mental attitude towards themselves. In essay after essay, expression is given to the growing desire for adult status. For example, a boy wrote, 'I like grown-ups who treat you as if you are growing up, and also people who are not too strict.' As puberty is reached the child begins to desire independence and needs respect and understanding rather than gifts and treats. A boy of nearly 15 says how he likes it when adults 'make a game or stunt enjoyable by joining in with you, or when they help you out of a difficulty by always letting you tell your side of the story'. A public schoolboy stressed this need for recognition as a young adult: 'Another good characteristic is to have a respect for everybody, even those set under you. You will find that by respecting the rights of smaller people they will be ready to help you when help is needed.'

Although one or two of the essays already quoted said that dress and looks were not so important as a generous nature, there was a widespread interest in well or suitably dressed adults. In one of two secondary modern schools in a large provincial town, clothes and personal appearance secured the second highest number of votes as a quality admired in persons they liked best. Several of the essays from other schools, including the public school, mentioned suitable dress as a necessity. The girl who wrote 'I do not care for a person who does not care what

they look like' voiced the views of a very large number of her contemporaries. A boy of 12 wrote, 'I like a fellow that dresses himself smartly and isn't a snob.' Interest in dress and appearance was by no means confined to girls in these essays; neither was it among members of the Grosvenor, with whom these matters were often discussed. There was less emphasis on dress and tidy appearance in the essays written by those under 11.

The pantomime children as a group were exceptional. The importance they attached to dress was almost pathological, and was far greater than the interest shown by any other children in this collection of essays. In the list of qualities they most admired dress and good looks between them secured the first three places; clothes came first; good teeth and good hair came next, and fourth on their list came a good complexion bracketed with a cheerful disposition. In two essays from this small group kindness and good temper were admired, as well as good manners and a pretty face. One girl described her mother in detail and her description was a regular inventory of physical attractions, to the neglect of any mental or spiritual characteristics. A typical paragraph reads, 'She is rather small. I am as big as her. She hasn't got a very big behind. She has lovely legs and some people say she's got nice ankles. She has false teeth but they are nice and white. She is 33 years of age.'

We have mentioned that authority and firmness topped the list of virtues admired by the public school writers, with ability in sports a close second. In the technical school, ability in sports came first on the list, and being well dressed came last but one, as it did in the case of the public school. The writers from the public and technical schools and from the rural school, as well as those from the large provincial town, all stress kindness to animals as a desirable virtue. Several essays decry the habit of bird-nesting. Drinking is deplored by the children in the provincial town, and by junior schoolchildren.

In nearly all the essays there is a direct or oblique reference to a jolly manner and a sense of humour as desirable qualities; this was one of the few abstract qualities listed by a pantomime girl, who said she liked 'a good sport'. Frequent use is made of such terms as 'happy', 'full of fun or jokes', 'can take a joke', 'agreeable', 'cheerful', 'laughs a lot'. Humour had to be kindly.

Several writers mentioned sarcasm as unpleasant. They appreciated fair criticism so long as it was kindly meant, although one or two referred to the ill effects of gossip by neighbours. One junior girl bitterly described a woman who lived in a 'play street' and who kept grumbling at the noise the children made and sending them away from the street. Other dislikes mentioned include people who were 'selfish', 'grumbling', 'greedy', 'a bully', 'always showing off', 'mean and deceitful', 'inquisitive people', 'tale tellers', and those who thought themselves important. Those under 11 especially hated 'liars'. Honest people without affectations were admired. A girl of 12 wrote, 'I like somebody with only one side . . .', and a girl of 15 said, 'I like honest people who do anything to get you out of trouble . . people that don't shout.'

The qualities that these children admired were not those that they are often expected to, such as courage and toughness, which are hardly mentioned at all. All the writers show an extraordinary and wholly admirable detachment in describing adults. They are never so emotionally bound up with them that they cannot sum them up in a cool and collected way. Even the 9-year-olds refer to adults as 'they'. This frankness is natural to children. We found that those we dealt with in the evenings were embarrasingly frank about their parents, their teachers, and their own feelings and sexual habits. They had the same calm detachment as the child who described her mother as if she were some beautiful stranger in the house. There was little bitterness at the theft of her sweets and presents, just plain statement of fact. This essay was written in a school where the young were free to be frank and factual, and where no emotional demands were made upon them by the teachers.

Most youngsters were ready and eager to write and very few of these essays were at all lacking in things to say. Some of those who could not express themselves easily on paper had made lists of qualities they admired or disliked. One gets the impression of a mass of children eager for the chance of telling the adults who impinge upon their lives and liberties exactly what they think of them. They liked the security offered by the adult of even temper, who was always the same towards them and ready to laugh with them and make them feel welcome. They liked a reli-

able person, and, given these things, they did not mind the adult who was firm with them or who made them make an effort. The young child who described her father who did not take her to the pictures or let her do what he thought would not be good for her, had complete faith in him because he was fair and kind. Over and over again this attitude is expressed in these essays. These children all demand a certain respect from the adult, which is a real need when they reach puberty and feel that they also are adult. As a final warning to all adults, let us quote the boy of 14 who ended his essay, 'Sometimes some young people are not treated nice and spanked. Then I like somebody playing with them and keeping them happy as much as they can.'

In a series of discussions during the summer of 1953 with some of our members ranging in age from 14 to 21 we encouraged further thought on the question which type of person they liked best or least. We got immediate and interesting reactions to the persons whom they saw every night. W. Hughes, our sports organiser, was generally admired because 'he can be strict but he doesn't go against that person after he has told him off. He will try to get him into something. He tries to get everybody in.' Another boy said of him, 'He gives you a fair chance,' and a girl, 'He is never too busy to attend to you,' 'He mixes with you.' One girl liked the Steward because 'She is always the same. She helps you. There is nothing she won't do for you or everybody'. Many of the staff were criticised for not being strict enough. Frequent descriptions were, 'He is only good with a good student. Then he can't take enough trouble.—After they have cut their class for weeks he let's them creep back into the team. It's not fair'; 'He is not definite enough and he doesn't make a suggestion as to what you should do. The ordinary people who are not so good are not attended to.'

When asked to think of a person they did not like, far too many selected a teacher from the school they had attended. One 16-year-old boy said, 'There was a teacher at school. He wasn't sociable; no one could get on with him. If you were in his bad books and you did the slightest thing wrong, he groused at you and when he grumbled at you he made sure a lot of others could hear what he said and then he took the story round the school. Once he found a bit of paper with a dirty story on it in a

boy's book. He grumbled and then he took the paper round and showed it to all the other teachers and then he came back and told the boy off again . several tellings-off all over the one thing. There was no forgetting anything with him. If a lot of people had misbehaved he would pick on one or two and blame them. It was unfair.'

This harping on a misdemeanour was generally unpopular. One boy described an older man whose young son had got his coat torn. Two years after this he still said to his son as he went out, 'Now mind you don't tear your coat.' A girl said, 'We have a teacher like that. She keeps you in if you annoy her and she never forgets it. She keeps it all in her mind and she throws it up at you.' Another 15-year-old girl said, 'Some teachers are petty. They pick on little faults. They run one girl down to the others and to the other teachers.' When the Baron asked, 'Do they ever talk about the nice things you do?' it was a boy who replied bitterly, 'You can't ever do a nice thing for them. They only see the nice things in their pets.'

It was a girl who described the headmaster of a boy's school near her own school. She said, 'He bullies the boys. I saw him push a boy downstairs because he got in his way. My mother took my brother to be interviewed to see if he could go to that school. At the interview my brother asked quite a sensible question and this headmaster ignored him and turned on my mother and said, 'So you bring up imbeciles?' Another girl commented, 'Some teachers treat you as if you were not the same as them.' A boy of 17 made a similar comment when he said, 'I dislike a person in a superior position who builds a barrier between himself and you.' This is very similar to the public schoolboy's view expressed in one of the essays. Similar too is the dislike of sarcasm which was mentioned in many essays. A girl said, 'I hate sarcastic people. My father is sarcastic. He seems to love to show me up in front of people. If a friend calls for me on Sunday before the lunch things are washed up he will say, "You see how Beryl always washes up on Sunday." It is humiliating.'

Comments on parents varied. One girl said, 'I really like my Mother. She is always cheerful and I am not the only one who thinks she is unusual. All sorts of people come to her with their troubles.' Another girl of 17 pulled her up and said, 'A grown-up

can be much too cheerful. You don't want a person cheerful all the time. You may not feel so bright yourself.' This particular girl was in the throes of a love affair with a moody though agreeable young man of 20. Hers was a usual attitude with those who were older. Younger children, as we have seen, demand even temper and jolliness all the time but as older adolescents become moody and sad themselves they dislike eternal cheerfulness in those around them. Over-cheerful adults seem insensitive to their gloom.

We had many unfavourable references to broken homes and many effects of such homes are seen in these pages. One girl said, 'I dislike my father. He left my mother when I was very young. I never saw him again till I was 10 and my mother had died. Then he came and cried and gave me 10s. Why did he have to leave my Mother for all those years and then come and give me money when it was too late?' Another girl said, 'My father doesn't live with us now but he comes to see us. He never offers to take me out. When we have no visitors he gives me 2s. 6d. but if we have somebody there, he gives me 7s. 6d. just to show off and look big. Why can't he be the same when we are alone?'

We have seen already in the essays this desire for people who were always the same and for happy united homes. Meanness and showing off are unpopular with all ages. A boy described his cousin who was in a bus queue with five or six youngsters. He saw an empty bus approach and said, 'I will wait for the next bus, to make room for you all on this one.' As the boy said, 'We all knew he wanted to save paying our fares. Why not say so?' One boy disliked a club leader he had known who was always 'asking for your weekly payment. You have to pay deposits on everything and he has to get the money in. You know he has to ask but he could sometimes talk about something else. He never just greets you. He gets out a book to check how you are getting on with your weekly payments. It is the keeping on and on that I don't like.' Another boy who had said that the only thing he disliked was people who threaten, explained, 'If you mean to pay as soon as you can and still they keep on asking, it may make you think you won't pay. Perhaps you feel they don't trust you enough.'

There was much criticism of superiors at work. One girl despised her boss because 'he won't give me anything definite to do. He is bad tempered. He is distrusting. Then after you have had a row with him he is smarmy. He sends you out to buy him buns and he times you while you are gone.' Another girl hated the supervisor who could not bear to see a junior sit down for a moment: 'She wants you pushed around.' Other girls talked of the tittle-tattle between supervisors and different girls. A boy liked his foreman because, unlike so many of his seniors, he never complained about him in his absence but waited till he could talk to him in private about anything that had gone wrong. There was a good deal of intense resentment at being appointed to a job as an office boy and finding all you had to do was to make tea and run errands and get told off like a 'school-kid'.

A great deal of the criticism of adults at work came from some of the inherent difficulties of 'reception' into employment. The school-leaver feels that now he has really reached adult status. He is a schoolchild no longer and will not be 'pushed around'. Then he starts work. Often no one expects him. No fuss is made on the great first day at work. He is the junior and treated as very young. He appears to be taught none of the interesting processes he longs to work at but he runs errands and makes tea or dusts the shop; he is given no responsibility at all and then accused by his elders of being irresponsible. A lot of damage is done when a youngster who feels grown-up is treated like a child who cannot be trusted.

Friends and loves and contemporaries generally were not mentioned by our groups so much as older people. In the few cases where they were discussed, the points raised were similar to those raised by younger children. Tale-tellers were unpopular and so were those who decried all other friends of their special friend. One girl put this succinctly when she said, 'I hate people who run your friends down. You mention someone to them and they go on about what is wrong with them. Soon they have blackmailed the whole Grosvenor. I have got to know some of the people who have been run down to me and they are really very nice people. But my mind has been poisoned against them by these blackmailers.' Another girl said, 'I like a person

who does not spread confidences around . . who can keep a secret.' She then mentioned the very popular girl-friend of a boy who was outstanding in drama and said she was the right sort of friend. The boy in question was asked what he liked about his girl and he answered, 'She is not too forward and not too backward. She mixes well and she is cheerful and friendly. She has had a bad foot but she has not complained about the pain. She has stayed cheerful. She is intelligent.' It was interesting to hear why this romance lasted and so many others broke by the wayside. This girl was not possessive. She never tried to get between a boy and his interests. She was affectionate without being emotional to a disturbing degree. These children were upset by a girl or boy who made constant scenes. They were not ready for intense emotional demands.

Like the public schoolboys, our members set great store by authority and firmness and a happy outlook; they liked intelligence, wit and fair play in those who dealt with them. They wanted everyone in a group to rank as important, not only the talented ones. They admired honest people who really respected young persons and they hated affectation. They were quick to notice meanness and even quicker to despise weakness. They were frank and direct themselves and they expected frank directness from those in charge of them. They expected friendliness and kindness but they wanted to be made to work; in their view kindness was compatible with strictness, though not with bad temper.

Sarcasm was unpopular because it was thought to be a cloak for spite whereas firmness and criticism could spring from affection for and faith in the individual criticised. A girl said of her aunt, 'She is never nice but always critical. You have a new dress or some new shoes. You are pleased and excited and you go to see her in them. She makes a face and says nastily, "much too old for you", or "not your style at all". It makes me furious. Soon after I came to the Grosvenor the Baron asked me rather fiercely was I a member here and when I said I was he grunted and said what class did I go to and I told him and then, when I was terrified, he said, "Pretty dress you are wearing", and I was relieved and glad.'

It was a boy of 20 who brought us back to the indeterminate factors that govern our choice of friends and our likes and dis-

likes when he said, 'I had a good friend in the army. We liked each other the first time we met and long before we had been drafted to the Far East together. I don't admire his tastes or habits. He drinks more than I do. We don't read the same sort of books. We don't share many interests. He never writes and he goes away for many months and we don't worry about each other. But when he is in London he looks me up and we see each other. I am unreasonably glad to see him.'

More research into the kind of personality desirable in teachers and professors will reveal many such mysterious and sudden attractions. It is impossible for the most impartial and fair-minded not to prefer some students to others. But these reports by children ranging in age from 8 to 21 on those who are appointed to teach them, to employ them or to assist in their social welfare, may offer certain suggestions as to methods of dealing with the great mass of important individuals who really want their pastors and masters to succeed with them.

All the time that this material was being collected, we were making our own observations and experiments with various types of instructors. Our successes and failures with staff were teaching us much that both added to and confirmed some of the youngsters' own findings. The most successful men and women were those who were more interested in their students than in themselves. Mere interest was not enough and, although friendliness was essential if an instructor was to succeed, skill and the ability to convince the young that they really were making progress in the subject were equally important.

These children's reports suggest that everyone concerned with education needs periodically to pause and take stock. So far as our own conclusions can be generally stated, it would appear that the young like the unexpected. They have an almost basic need for colour and freshness in approach. A flamboyant personality backed by recognizable knowledge and skill is likely to succeed. A. E. Wilson who ran our singing and musical appreciation groups had wit and temperament combined with an awareness of his audience. He could also start at their level in that he played popular and jazz music with the skill that many reserve only for the classics. He was thus able to earn their respect by doing well what all could admire before introducing

the classics to those capable of appreciating the best. Even to the confirmed lowbrow he incidentally put the classics on the map, as he was often heard playing Beethoven and yet he was not a remote aesthete but a man whom Arthur described as, 'That's a chap you can talk to.' A girl said of him, 'Sometimes I think he is not strict enough. And sometimes he forgets to bring you the song he said he would get you, but we should all hate to lose him. He can play so well himself and you like him as a person, whatever his faults.'

Mere popularity by itself is unlikely to last. We proved that with some young women instructors in gymnastics, who were all that the class dreamed of being themselves. For a time this was enough; but the young like surprises and reserves and very young staff are naturally apt to become involved in their own emotions, as do some older persons who are over intense. Some young university graduates who served us well for a time were cases in point. The need to go off and lead a personal life of their own was understandable.

One of them started our drama group. She had only boys in the group which was highly successful for a time until the 'players' complained that they had been ridiculed by some of the rowdier members of the non-acting community. We then had a new instructor who found production unpopular after one good performance as the cast again complained of ridicule. Play-reading became popular with her group and she was astonished at the remarkably low level of literacy in many of her class, who refused to read but obviously enjoyed hearing the others read such plays as the 'problem' plays of Galsworthy. Thus drama had already showed us two fundamental points about our students, the tendency to mock all activity not accepted in their own circle and the difficulty of educating those with little capacity for reading and no formed reading habits. Then Douglas Sawyer took the group over and made a success of it. He had obvious skill in all aspects of production, he knew plays and players and he took a personal interest in all his students. He too was summed up as a man you can talk to. He learned to discipline them without over-riding their personal needs, and his group became an entity without becoming a clique.

Cookery for a mixed group started as a riot and ended as a

happy and progressive form of education. Mrs. Muir who effected the transformation was a brilliant cook herself. She insisted on a high standard of work and hers was the discipline of the job well done. But, unlike many in this field, she was by no means a savage disciplinarian. If a boy or girl did not want to make the dish set for that week, an alternative could be found, so long as he or she had come to learn and work. Smoking was not permitted in her centre, but when a dish was in the oven those who wished might go out into the corridor and smoke. Hers was a reasonable discipline. If a group were working their rather loud conversation was not criticised. Her strength was that right from the start her students produced appetising food. They learned that care and scrupulous cleanliness, with attention to nutrition values, can go with really appetising results when the oven is opened. To many who came from a background of slapdash meals, here was a revelation.

We have shown how some of the non-athletic group instructors worked and in all the cases cited we have seen that the instructor who expected much from his students lost nothing in regard; for the young like the flattery implicit in a high expectation. They like a person who, they feel, can 'teach you something'. They like a 'success story' in those who teach them. Bernard Crouch who ran our table tennis gave them this added to great skill and energy and a pleasant personality. 'Johnnie', who taught Judo after Alf Morton went to New Zealand, had been a world champion and this, together with a firm but gentle personality and interest in the progress of all his class, helped him. Bernard Blighton, our instructor-in-charge of physical education, had been an Olympic gymnast and this, together with an encyclopaedic knowledge of sports and fitness, put him across successfully. Because he knew his subject he could be firm and fearless. George Blake, our gymnastics and swimming expert, also knew his subject, was gifted at display work and had many other hobbies such as photography. Education with him was not, as with so many others, a matter of watertight compartments. If a boy had an accident he was the first to visit him in hospital. Once when some of his class were involved in a court case he was the first to bring the newspaper with the report to the Baron to see if anything could be done.

In the early days Alf Morton was a strong influence in the Grosvenor. He taught Judo twice a week and was sports organiser for three nights. He had grown up in this area and so had first-hand knowledge of the background of these youngsters. He was himself a skilled tradesman as well as a champion wrestler, and his interests included a love for music and some proficiency in it, coupled with a firm adherence to many unorthodox opinions and a distaste for alcohol and tobacco. He was often to be seen sitting in the local pub sipping his lemon squash and arguing about the inadequacy of jazz. His influence lived long after he had emigrated in 1950 and it is probable that A. E. Wilson benefited from the spadework done by him in showing that toughness can go with a real appreciation of the arts.

Fear, unlike some other emotions, seems to be in a category of its own. Its effect is instantaneous. A direct fear that the class will not obey will at once make them wild and rowdy but an indirect fear will have an equally severe effect. This was illustrated by one of our instructors, an elderly lady who was sadly dependent upon her earnings with us. Her fear of losing her job loomed larger for her than her interest in individual students. This fear communicated itself to the youngsters. She could do nothing with them. Once Alf demonstrated this effect. At an early camp it rained all the first day. He heard one boy say he should go home. He knew that if one went the others might also strike camp and his fear nearly made this happen. Panic of any kind is contagious. We have reported that clay-modelling and pottery seemed activities that attracted not only those gifted in art but also those who were in an unbalanced state of emotional development. One of the main factors in the stabilising of this activity was the even temper of Catherine Ensor who taught it. An even temper, coupled with real knowledge and time to take an interest in individuals, seems essential.

We noted that our members all reported well of W. Hughes, who became our sports organiser. They liked the assurance that if they went too far he would be firm with them coupled with his wit, humour and even temper. They noted that he bore no grudges and he would help the member he had just 'torn a strip off' back to favour by 'getting him into something at once'. Likes and dislikes in regard to personality seem to have no rela-

tion whatever to social grading. Before the bar of youth the university don, the young debutante, the all-in wrestler and the ex-Olympic gymnast stand equal.

In our free society of the Institute, where youngsters could come or go as they pleased, it was even more important to find just what kind of adult could succeed in persuading them that it was worth while to stay and learn. To impose an inadequate personality upon them was suicidal. The fact had to be faced that in order to succeed our staff must be acceptable to the young. As we saw in the schoolchildren's essays, pupils were quite clear as to what they expected of adults. They stated what they thought was reasonable behaviour. It seems evident that their response educationally or socially depends on how far their simple demands as to behaviour are met by the adults with whom they come into contact.

A list given by young people of the qualities they like or dislike in adults would be dangerous as a sole guide. Most of the essays and all the conversation we quote were written or spoken with definite individuals in mind. These young reporters were not speaking out of a vacuum but discussing human beings who had made a strong impression upon them. From their reactions to those placed in a position of some authority we did find some guiding principles. Knowledge, learning and skill in their elders were important but these had to be integrated with a real affection for the young. Yet it was clear that affection alone was not enough; for the young wanted to be taught something, and to feel that it was something that an adult needed to know.

Chapter Three

SELF-STUDY AS A MEANS OF SOCIAL STUDY

'I frequently make statistical records of form and feature in the street or in company without exciting attention by means of a small pricker on a piece of paper'.

Enquiries into Human Faculty, FRANCIS GALTON

The members who were so regularly to be found in and out of our office, and those whom we had come to know more intimately at camp, seemed, as we have mentioned, to possess powers of reasoning, of invention and of ready repartee, that suggested a higher degree of intelligence than that displayed in their proficiency at spelling, or endorsed upon their school-leaving reports. Our self-study group was designed to help us learn enough about them to find a common level at which their education might begin.

Preliminary questionnaires had accustomed them to the fact that we were always likely to come to them for information, and that we were not prompted by idle curiosity but by a desire to improve present organisation in the light of acquired knowledge of its faults. Their apparent frankness and friendliness were flattering, although we suspected that they only told us what they felt it expedient for us to know in the manner of the children in Henry James' *Turn of the Screw*. The fact that truth rather than retribution was our object in asking questions did secure more of their confidence than we might otherwise have had. The young, like their elders, enjoy talking about themselves, and very little skill is needed to interest them in the simpler problems of psychology. We had prepared the ground by a fair amount of informal discussion of such matters when, in 1948, Mr. Hugh Child, psychologist to the L.C.C., agreed to give an intelligence test (matrix) to some sixty of our members. There

was as much excitement over the results of this test as over a final cup-tie when a local team was playing. Boys and girls stopped the Steward and the Baron on every possible occasion when they met, inside and outside the Institute, asking, 'Have the results come?' We had a very similar interest when Mr. Belsen, a B.B.C. research worker, gave some seventy of our members a verbal intelligence test in 1952. Even those who had done the tests for Mr. Child were eager for this second result.

With both tests the results compared favourably with those secured by army entrants. This is possibly due to the fact that our members were definitely encouraged to do well, whereas army candidates may regard it as just another fatigue. In a few cases boys who had qualities of character, wit and talent, came very low. Edgar was bottom for the matrices test, and yet he had won a grammar school education by scholarship, and he passed his City and Guilds Plumbing Certificates. His ready wit and skill at indoor games, such as table tennis, would have appeared further signs of a high intelligence. We invited him to join our self-study group, now familiarly known as the Brains Trust, and he will be seen to have made a very creditable contribution to the work of the group. The second test, taken in 1952, yielded in many cases surprisingly reliable results; indeed had we set out to grade our members on the basis of our own experience our list would, in all but a few cases, have tallied with Mr. Belsen's. This result gave us a handle with those who, as we knew, had far more ability than they ever used; we could say that no one with that high score had any excuse for not undertaking some more purposeful activity. There were a few individuals who had creative ability in discussion and showed intelligence, but who did very little at the Grosvenor. This test picked out these people. Jake who had definite ability in art but who, with his friend, did nothing if he could help it, said, 'All my friends expect me to take nothing seriously. If some of them came in and saw me really working in the art group they would laugh like anything.' He came higher than many plodders and when told that he had done well he asked who had beaten him, and was really horrified to find that six girls had. He said bitterly, 'You call it doing well to be beaten by those girls. Fancy a girl getting more marks. I am disappointed.' When it

was suggested that surely he would not want a brainless mother for his son, he was by no means comforted.

The excitement caused by both these intelligence tests at dates four years apart suggests that these young people are eager to know their own level. This became evident in more and more ways as we went on with our work. The bulk of our members came from schools where no school-leaving examination was taken. Many educationalists hoped that the secondary modern school would be a freer and a better place for not being fettered to an examination syllabus. Certainly the stream of young people who go through the secondary modern school would gain nothing from being tied to the old-fashioned School Certificate curriculum, and many of them would fail to make the grade. But young people do like to be tested; they want to know that they are making progress; they like to have an end in view, other than some abstract ideal of learning. In the junior school at 11 they have been weeded out as not fitted for a grammar or technical school education. Since then they have not had to work for any other outside test. The old general School Certificate had many drawbacks as an examination that curbed freedom and experiment in schools; but it had one advantage as a general hall-mark of educational attainment which parents, employers and the ordinary man could understand. This gave an aim for which application to work and concentration could be encouraged. But in the secondary modern school there is no such outside test of ability. The top boy in one school may find himself far below average in another. Just as security of background enables the young child to know where he stands emotionally, so some means needs to be found of showing the school-leaver where he stands educationally, in relation to the whole community. At present vast numbers of senior scholars suffer from an overwhelming inferiority complex. Here are two immediate tasks for educational research: first to find a means of ensuring that freer studies be taken seriously; secondly to devise tests compatible with new freedoms, which will give pupils an understandable end in view.

The interest aroused by intelligence tests, by the problems of psychology and by simple research into human and social problems, suggests that at adolescence, which is an intensely personal

age, some introduction to simple psychology may be an appropriate educational discipline. Problems concerned with emotional relationships and parental control, affect them all and seem far more pressing than civics or local government, as they will not have a vote or take an active part in the latter till they are 21. To start from their personal problems will hold their interest and enable those teaching them to treat them as adult, and so to recognise puberty in a practical way. An academic lecture on psychology will leave them cold. We had an interesting lecture by an Australian psychologist who failed to hold them, because he gave examples of the behaviour of A, B and C, and did not ask about his audience. Tilly, one of our brighter members, was 'bored stiff' by him—'He didn't ask about *our dreams*'. Her reaction was similar to that of Slim to a Careers Talk given by a visiting lecturer at his grammar school, where the speaker had told them a great deal about all sorts of jobs but had not asked any of them what they hoped to take up. Slim said, 'He didn't ask us what job we would like, he wasn't interested in us. Somehow he seemed to put your hopes out.'

To be more interested in the youngster than in yourself or what you have to say seems a first essential with the adolescent. The particular case of one of the many post-graduate students who asked our assistance in carrying out part of a research project, while working for a doctorate in provincial and overseas universities, was quite astonishing. He asked to give a talk one evening and to show a film on the following evening, at the end of which he wanted to ask the youngsters to complete some questionnaires on it. This was a reasonable plan, as he aimed at preparing the way for the film in his talk. But he had ignored the fact that those who would be free to attend a lecture on, say, a Tuesday, would be likely to have some other activity on a Wednesday and thus those who attended the film show were not, as he had planned, the same individuals as the audience at the lecture. He was in good form at his lecture but was in a state of noticeable tension on the following evening. Because of this, he did not appear very interested in, or friendly with his audience. The Baron stayed with him until the audience had completed the rather complicated questionnaire he had brought along. Later the youngsters were told they could have a tea

break. The lecturer's tension seemed to have communicated itself to them as they went quite wild when let loose. The Steward received calls from instructors in several parts of the building that unruly mobs were surging along corridors or bursting into classrooms. She herself discovered one mob breaking up play in a hall of table-tennis tables and had to threaten to close the Grosvenor unless the mob subsided. Had anyone warned us that one student psychologist could bring about the nearest approach to a real riot that we ever had, we should have been incredulous; although we always found that adolescents sense fear in an adult and that their reaction to it is complete defeatism. Failure they abhor, possibly because it adds to their own deep lack of confidence, and although they take kindly to diffidence, the person in charge of them must not be in any way afraid. This fact suggests that if we are to find out the truth about youth, investigators may have to be chosen with considerable care.

We planned first to train our own self-study group in the free expression of their own thoughts, moods and habits, and then to send them out to observe other groups and individuals and to notice how far they resembled, or differed from, themselves. The selection of the first members of the Brains Trust might itself have presented problems. Had we selected persons whom we already knew to be trying to 'speak our language', or think along our lines and take an interest in research, we might have narrowed the field by creating an initial bias in the group. We wanted to learn about the ordinary youngster, not the cream, the élite who were likely to raise themselves out of the rut.

Aware of such difficulties we chose impulsively, and adopted the army principle of selection, 'you and you and you'. We began with twelve 'you's' and maintained this numerical strength as a minimum, bringing in new blood all the time, as members left to join the Forces or for other reasons, or as members who seemed useful recruits presented themselves. Edgar, as we have explained, we selected for a different reason. It was made clear to members that hard work and regular attendance were expected, and excuses would not be accepted. Those who could not live up to this standard were allowed to leave after a week or two. Secrecy was enjoined, so that in asking for com-

plete frankness we did not expose the members to outside consequences. What they said did not penetrate beyond the four walls of the special room used for the meetings. Inside this room the group were an élite and privileged but they were not treated as such in the Institute. In fact we noted at camp that members of the group took opposite sides in several disputes.

The overt purpose of the survey which the group was to make was simply explained to them. The new Education Act and the promise of County Colleges would affect them and might mean changes in the organisation of places like the Grosvenor. A lot of time and money might be saved if we could find out what the 14–21 age-group did with their spare time, and what would be likely to interest them most if they had to engage in further formal education. We know that to be objective is possibly more difficult for the adolescent than for older people (although far too many older people never learn to be objective in outlook or work), and we did aim at encouraging objectivity in all that the group did. Our approach to every question, in so far as fallible humans can make it so, was one of simple enquiry. We did not know, neither did they, but it was suggested that together we might find some facts to go upon. While trying not to be pernickety, we took little for granted, and stressed all the time the need for accurate observation and statement. A rewarding aspect of the whole venture was the immediate response to this simple appeal, once it had been explained in terms that they could understand. There grew up a jealous watch on all statements made. This stress on the need for factual accuracy introduced reason into what might otherwise have been an atmosphere charged with sentiment. There was very little of what might be termed 'letting the hair down'. There was also little talking at each other. Thrust and counter-thrust we had in an effort to get at the real truth, and such verbal play was often vigorous, and always without rancour. We had a larger job to do, and petty personal issues took second place.

Very soon there was competition to be chosen for the Brains Trust, as it was the only group that was not open to all. For those selected there was an immediate sense of achievement in being chosen at all. A group that kept its secrets had a beguiling mystery about it. Requests to be allowed to join were always

refused, and it was explained that the Baron picked this team. In an institution where attendance itself was voluntary and the choice of activity rested with the individual member, this opposite procedure came as a contrast and perhaps as a healthy shock. Samuel Butler advocates the holding of any belief with what he terms 'charitable inconsistency', and there was something of this quality in an arbitrarily selected group in the midst of a community where free choice of activity was the rule. A certain amount of astonishment was expressed at some of the individuals we chose. Buster, who was plump and jovial, 18 years old, a keen cyclist, and a keener drinker, owned that his friends asked him, 'If it's a Brains Trust they are after, how did you get in it?'

After two years, seven of the original twelve members were still attending the meetings regularly. The Services had claimed some of the five we had lost; one had emigrated to Australia, and one girl had left the Grosvenor owing to an all-absorbing love affair. Others were tried and found wanting, some of them lasting but a few weeks. This chapter covers some four years and about twenty leading personalities will appear in the discussions. Wherever possible the members' own words have been quoted. The potential poetry in the ordinary utterance of the well-nigh inarticulate is often of a high order. These youngsters can explain themselves more graphically than any older person. This is illustrated by the titles they find for their works of art or concerts. They nearly always pick a better one themselves. One girl made a model of a reclining nude. This was her first work in clay and it was to be put in an exhibition. The Steward asked should she call it, 'Nymph bathing', and the girl replied decisively, 'Call it "*Waiting*"—that's what it is.'

Here are a few notes about some of the members of the Brains Trust. One of the original members was Will, who in some ways was a tragedy. He had gained a scholarship to a public school from a good working-class home and background. His bombastic father flaunted his clever son during the school holidays, to the latter's agonised embarrassment, and the father's violent tempers were a source of terror to the mother of whom Will was devotedly fond. An old bone of contention in the home was the father's spendthrift habits, and when a period of unemployment

came Will's scholastic career had to be cut short just after matriculation. Will's sense of responsibility coloured all his life. He was the only member of the group who had been psychoanalysed, though Simon had had some psychological treatment. Will was equally at home on paper or in speech. His sentences were rounded with an almost Victorian precision. He had the ability to see the wider implications of many subjects. Often after one of our meetings he would send in a written comment on some aspect of the discussion. After a consideration of gangs by the group he sent in one such memorandum, with an appended comment on cliques, which read, 'There are a number of cliques in the Grosvenor, banded together for I don't know what. Though they do no physical damage they do cause mental discomfort—*at first*. When I first joined I knew one member only and it remained that way for some considerable time, because in certain directions I was under the impression that I was an outsider. In fairness to members of these cliques I must say that I am very shy by nature, which of course may have caused me to reach a wrong conclusion. But I should add that several other persons have casually mentioned to me in conversation during the past few weeks that there are cliques here. Once the members of these cliques have seen you around for a while you are automatically accepted. One suggestion I should like to tack on to the end here is, that members of the Grosvenor be discouraged from hanging around in the corridors doing nothing. If they wish to laze, I put it that the canteen is a useful place for this.'

All his reports had a delightful seriousness and dignity, as had his contributions to any discussion. Very soon after he joined the Grosvenor he struck up a fast friendship with Irene, one of the more purposeful of our girl members. Their love affair, leading in due course to engagement and marriage, was typical of many between boys returning to the Institute on demobilisation and girls of a few years younger. Unlike Will, Irene seldom risked committing even the simplest word to paper. However she was no shadow of Will, and from the beginning could secure his attention when necessary, as, although she often appeared diffident, she had a quiet but dogged persistence. This was obvious both in her attitude to Will and in her attitude to her favourite pursuit of tap-dancing. She not only regularly attended our

class, but she also attended another class in this subject nearer her home. In the early days of their romance Will had occasion to leave the Brains Trust meeting early, and as there was a certain amount of banter over the cause, he sent a note to the Baron, saying, 'I feel that some explanation must be given for my early departure from the meeting, and I also want to dispel any suggestion that I might be "girl chasing". Though there is a young lady involved I would have done the same for anyone. This young lady has to attend a class in a club where the male members are far from being gentlemen, and she asked me to see her to and from this class to save her from embarrassment.'

This letter tells us a fair amount about both Irene and Will. Her mother was a widow, and an aunt lived with them, so that she had grown up in an atmosphere that Owen described as 'prudish'. She was short and almost dumpy, with curling dark hair and brown eyes, good teeth and a fresh complexion. Will was tall and well-made, and excelled at physical training and gymnastics. Irene appeared almost bovine at times, but she carried on a tap-dancing class with great efficiency all through a summer vacation, when we opened voluntarily without paid instructors. When we had a new instructor, who set out to improve technique, Irene owned that at first she was discouraged but she soon mastered the new technique; she felt that she never would succeed in this and Will said, 'It is your temperament that discourages you, not your ability.' Owen also praised her in no uncertain terms, which was unusual for him, by saying, 'The girl has ideas; she is by no means empty headed.'

Another member of our team was Buster, who was short and plump. A ponderous heave of the right shoulder gave advance warning that he was about to contribute to a discussion. Except for a slight flush, his embarrassment was not shown. The preliminaries over, a point was advanced or countered, always with brevity, sometimes with wit. His reply, when asked why he regularly attended the Brains Trust, was a masterpiece of understatement: 'I'm expected to do something up here and this is a soft option.' Yet once only did he fail to do his assignment of work, though to him even simple written work was a trial. All his written reports were carefully compiled and contained many concise statements. In one of his interview notes, a boy of 20 is

quoted as defining leisure as 'complete relaxation of the mind'. Buster was an only son; his mother ran a boarding house and his father was a foreman in a factory. His was a happy tolerant home and he had plenty of freedom. This may have nurtured his genial tact. Once when someone complained of parental interference Buster said, 'Why tell your parents everything? I don't, and then they can't be critical. I don't always tell them things they wouldn't mind my doing, as, if I did, they might expect to be told everything.'

His notes were nearly always based on authentic observation and seldom on opinion. When the group was first asked to find out about razor-slashing, it was Buster who reported a long talk that he had had with a man who used to belong to a razor-slashing gang. He was equally conscientious in attending his vocational training classes on set evenings. He also liked a game of cards in the canteen of an evening and, as we noticed at camp, a good 'booze-up' at week-ends and holidays. He resisted any attempt to widen his cultural activities on holiday. He was one of the rebels when we tried to take a party to a cheese factory, saying, 'I have come away for a holiday.' When we paid an educational visit to Canterbury, he led the party to the cinema instead of the cathedral, and he was one of the fiercest of those who protested that there was nothing else to do there. He was violently aggressive when a coach bringing a party back from a camp stopped at a café and not at a pub. Yet he had a disciplined intelligence in practical matters, and he often produced the apt rejoinder. He and Tilly were close friends for some time, but when there was better quarry for either there would be a temporary severance, and the other would not complain. These often casual and almost un-sentimental linkings of boy and girl were typical. Once when the group went out to do an evening's survey Tilly and Buster were thus paired. The Baron sat next to Tilly on the bus and said, 'I hope you don't mind if I sit next to your girl-friend, Buster.' The right shoulder rose as Buster replied, 'That's all right Baron, I'm not worried. I've got youth on my side.' A few days after this outing, an unpleasantly flushed Buster was found hitting Tilly in the office.

Tilly was not quite 16 when the first Brains Trust meetings were held. She was a shorthand typist and could make concise

verbal or written notes with apparent ease. In her, liveliness, an arty taste in dress, a wide range of general interests, natural good looks and a mop of curly light brown hair, combined with a mass of pretensions and a frank manner of speech to form a charming extrovert. She once owned about herself, 'Although I like a good girl friend and plenty of interests, if I saw a boy I liked I'd chase him.' She liked boys, but she had firm ideas as to just how far she wanted them to go. Nevertheless, or perhaps mainly on account of this code, she was often unconsciously provocative for a whole evening at a time. It was this duality in her, so typical of adolescence, that may have led Buster, and others, to spank her. Oswald, an almost single-minded sports fan, summed her up when the group were arguing as to which show they should go to for a Christmas outing. Oswald suggested 'Folies Bergères' as, when not engaged in planning or playing football, he liked to see what he regarded as a daring entertainment, as we shall see at the close of Chapter Six. Tilly wanted to see a straight play, and said stiffly, 'Folies Bergères—but I don't like that sort of thing.' Oswald eyed her increduously and replied, 'Don't be ridiculous. You *are* that sort of thing.'

Yet the boys missed her pretensions when she was away from the meetings. On one such occasion they discussed the drugged cigarette racket at certain dance halls. No girl present had met this racket, and at the close of the meeting Giles said, 'What a pity Tilly wasn't here to-night. She would have been offered several drugged cigarettes by now and possibly also been abducted.'

He was nearer the truth than he knew in this sally, as Tilly, with all her cultural interests, was closely in touch with a number of members of the Institute who were loosely linked with London's underworld. Although she was in some ways rather a snob, she was friendly with and enjoyed the confidence of several who got into serious trouble. She was stimulated by working in a mixed group with boys but she had certain reserves. For a time she was friendly with a young man who had a car and who belonged to a circle of devotees of the ballet. Tilly assiduously read books on ballet and on opera and she went to the ballet with him but she refused to be a regular balletomane saying that she enjoyed ballet occasionally but not every week. Her independence was

not popular with her new friends and eventually she dropped the young man. While having plenty of pretensions of her own she could see through those of other people. Her frank and fearless manner in an interview or discussion helped with her work for our group but it did not help her in dealing with her step-father. She often argued with him and at times she was bitter about his reaction to her views.

As the work of the group continued, it became clear that at some times and in some respects its members needed guidance. Oswald was never happy in interviewing strangers, and when he was taken to a neighbouring youth club to question its members he said, in sudden panic, that he could never ask these people anything. Yet at sport he was not only expert but showed initiative. He wrote regular racy and readable sports reports for the local press, with no help from us. Before he was 17 he was secretary of our senior football team, the rest of whose members were over 18. He found pitches when extra ones were needed, he chartered coaches to take his team to play, and organised bevies of girl supporters to fill up and help pay for these coaches. Once when the Steward telephoned to him at his office, an estate-agent's, his chief apologised for his absence at lunch and offered to take a message. He had everyone trained.

At other times he was less self-reliant. He visited us at a camp when he was far from well. He was due to return before we did in order to play football in the home counties for a colts' team. He was never robust although so good at games. He went from one person to another on this occasion, seeking a lead as to whether he should go or not, and in the end he sought the Baron's advice and was told, 'Work it out; add up for and against returning home early or recuperating by the sea, and then decide. You have done it before in the Brains Trust.' He stayed on, probably wisely. He is an example of the fact that it is seldom possible to label an adolescent (or anyone else perhaps). A school report might use a label 'reliable' or 'self-reliant', and this might be true of some aspects of the pupil, but not of others. During their teens most are particularly vacillating and variable in behaviour. Oswald was the youngest of three brothers, and he came from a happy home.

Owen was another of the original members of the Brains Trust

and a self-appointed office and camp factotum. His delightfully acquisitive mind led him to collect information about all sorts of subjects from astronomy to philately. He often quite scared young visiting lecturers, as they confided that he seemed to know more than they did about the subject to be considered. He was practical and could work a cine projector or an epidiascope, and he was a keen amateur photographer. When he came out of the army he bought himself a small projector and gave shows. He was a member of our first drama group, and he acted as compère to many shows we gave in 1952, when he was a very senior member and an engaged man. He liked things well done and he admired order and discipline. Watching a girls' keep-fit group under a popular and pretty young woman instructor, he said, 'Very nice, no doubt; but the fault with that class is, no discipline. I'd like to have a bash at taking them myself.' His opportunity to do this came a few weeks later when the instructor was away. The Baron watched him, and he did very well and was really strict. Later when he joined the army he worked in the Catering Corps. On being posted to Germany he wrote to say he was happily employed, 'slowly poisoning the Military Police.' He added, with characteristic opportunism, 'I have been making a study of German youth clubs on my own

I think it would help me considerably if you would give me some form of introduction to German youth leaders from the L.C.C. On this I might also secure a permanent late pass to enable me to reach further afield.'

George was another early member of the Brains Trust. Although he was not officially a member of the Grosvenor, he was a friend of the leader of a unit that used our building once or twice a week. His mother had asked this friend if George might be allowed to call round occasionally, as his habit of sitting indoors for hours without apparent interest, and without even speaking to her, seemed morbid. He had done his army service and was really an accident in our group, as he was over 21 and past his adolescence. His gentleness and pleasant manners obtained his immediate acceptance by the group, and the fact that, although older, he thought our research worth doing added to the team's own confidence in the early days. Adult as he was in years he, like Oswald, needed a sharp awareness of his own

personality and temperament as an individual, before he could make a useful contribution. Everyone had to be helped to find their own individuality while working as part of a team. By the time George had emigrated to Australia with a friend he was nearer doing so, and his letters show an attitude to the Brains Trust which was general. To quote one: 'I had a look round Aden for a few hours and the heat was terrific . . . it was surprising to see modern cars used as taxis and to compare them with the hovels the people lived in. It seemed to me to be just the spot for one of your investigations as we were pestered by hordes of children asking for alms.'

A few months later he wrote from Australia, 'I have made enquiries about youth clubs here. In every district there are police boys' and girls' clubs where they run physical training and boxing classes, etc. These are for approximately up to 18 years old, after which they branch out on their own to tennis, cricket or the Y.M.C.A. . . . most popular are the sailing clubs. There are about six in Perth. A mate of mine at work is a member, and I often go with him. There is a fine public library here but for some reason one cannot borrow a book, only read it on the premises. I belong to the Adult Educational Library which is about four times the size of your office, and it has a very poor selection of books. . . . The latest craze here is ice skating.'

Catherine, girl friend of Don who, with Slim, was one of the stars in our gymnastic group selected to represent Great Britain in the Lingiaid games in Sweden, was a member of the Brains Trust. Don and Slim came irregularly, as their gymnastics' training had to take first place. Catherine was never shy of interviewing people, and her reports were always neatly typed and carefully compiled. She had a neat but generous figure, and her full bosom was the envy of the other girls and the admiration of the boys. It was once said of Sarah that she had 'An even bigger bosom that Catherine', and that this was a sure way to attract admiration from the opposite sex. Catherine gave a great deal of thought to her clothes and they cost her a lot of money. She had also a neat and tidy mind. Once when an American journalist was in the office asking what was the most popular age for marriage in Great Britain, Catherine took a pencil and pad and asked everyone in the building how they would answer this

query. She gave the number of girls and boys replying and their replies. On another occasion, when a younger girl was saying what she had been doing for a whole week-end, and included an hour spent in 'shopping', Catherine at once asked, 'What was this shopping? Real shopping or window shopping?' At another time, when Edgar was laying down the law saying that leisure could never be boring if you had enough money to afford interesting hobbies, Catherine said, 'I may seem funny but I enjoy going to work. You get a laugh at work. You like your mates. I'd miss work.' In her case her 'mates' were all men, as she was typist secretary to a garage and the only girl employed there. Once she had been arguing that boys had more real spare time than girls, as they seldom had to help at home or wash their own smalls. The Baron countered this with the proud announcement, 'I don't know. I wash my own vest and pants every week and I do my own ironing.' Catherine looked at him in horror and said, 'You only change your vest and pants once a week? I change mine oftener than that. Yours must be in a state.'

THE BARON: Yours are thin silk things I expect. Mine are wool.
WILL (breaking in): All men's vests and underpants last a week.
CATHERINE (with firm dignity): Well the man I marry will have his vests and pants washed more than once a week.

It was interesting that she thought boys had more time for reading than girls, as she was one of our best read members. Within a short time she had read *Kidnapped*, *Jane Eyre* and *Cold Comfort Farm*. She was also one of our better ballroom dancers, and when in 1952 we had two teams she was in the one for those over 18. Don was stationed in Scotland in the army at this time, and she had another permanent dancing partner.

Kit was the youngest long-standing member of the Brains Trust, having been invited to join at 14. He had a seriousness and a disconcertingly factual memory for all that the Baron, or many other people for that matter, had ever said. When a girl member of the group said that she didn't think any of our classes appealed to girls, Kit said, 'You may not think it, but when I walked into pottery last Friday, to my surprise, I found more girls there than boys.' Once when the Steward was talking to the group about the place of religion in the good life, Kit took her

aside at the end of the evening and said, 'The Baron wouldn't half be wild if he knew you had brought in religion. If there is a subject he won't have discussed, it is religion.'

He liked reading and once confessed that 'The only book I ever slung in before the end was *Pride and Prejudice*'. At home he had responsibilities as he was the eldest of four. If his mother wished to accompany his father to one of his many darts matches Kit had to stay at home and mind the house and younger children. He was not expected or allowed to be extravagant with his money, and he had a sense of responsibility. He inherited his father's taste for indoor games and was good at chess, draughts and whist. His mother was disappointed when he declined an apprenticeship in a draughtsman's office as he did not like the atmosphere there. He stayed in his second job in printing. It was friendly there. Everyone shared the work as and when it came in, and what impressed him most was, 'It is Christian names between us all, even the foreman.' Kit, like Will and Tilly, would on occasion hand in an unsolicited report, usually in a sealed plain envelope. Had he met the term it would have been labelled 'top secret'.

There were members of the group who feared to reveal the depths of their illiteracy. Cuthbert was one such. He had joined the Grosvenor on demobilisation, introduced by his cousin who was a Judo fan. He was the child of a broken home and he had a friendly temperament. He was outstanding in many activities, such as gymnastics and clay modelling. When we were planning an open evening he said one of the factors that, in his view, gave the Grosvenor a real advantage over many voluntary organisations for youth, was the generous supply of excellent equipment issued to it by the local education authority. This equipment should be displayed. The Baron asked him to arrange such an exhibition and he did so, taking an afternoon off for the purpose. In the Brains Trust discussions he made many thoughtful suggestions, but, asked to do written work, he was nonplussed, as he was ashamed of his poor spelling and bad handwriting. We never had the chance to see either, so we were in no position to judge.

Giles was a late comer to the Brains Trust, being 17 when he joined. He came of a large and happy family, the eldest boy

amongst several sisters. He once asked, 'Can you tell me why I am never at home with men of my own age, but only with older ones? Is it because I have so many sisters at home?' He had been delicate in his childhood, having had rheumatic fever, and had been sent to a country home to recuperate. This had interrupted his education. Once when the boys from the home were out for a walk, one of them, aged 12, had said to his friend, 'That woman looks as if she were going to have a baby.' When the party got back to the house the master in charge publicly caned the boy for making what he was pleased to term a 'disgusting remark', and Giles said, 'After that we never dared discuss the subject again.'

His home seems to have counteracted any ill-effects of this repressive atmosphere. His mother he once described as, 'placid and sweet-tempered'. His father was an active worker in the local Labour party. When Giles left school at 14, he undertook training as a bookseller. He worked in a bookshop by day and attended evening lectures in preparation for his bookseller's examinations. Despite his early educational handicaps, he was one of the youngest candidates to pass this qualifying examination. While he was working for this qualification he used the Grosvenor for recreation, coming up to do clay modelling, table tennis, painting, and, of course, to find girl friends. Later he regularly attended the Brains Trust. He had perhaps a readier wit than anyone in the group, and was the sliest leg-puller of them all. His witticisms always revealed a flaw in an argument, and were never mere 'showing off'. Once attitudes were under discussion and Tilly, with characteristic abandon, said, 'I think it impossible to talk of right attitudes. In a world of free human beings everyone is entitled to their own attitude.'

GILES: Surely colour prejudice can't be a right attitude? Would Tilly hold that a free human being, in the interests of individuality, should be allowed to murder a negro?

In discussing various rules made by the local authority the Baron explained that he could not relax the rule of attendance at one class a week, even if he wanted to, as no inspector could approve of his action, and one might be sent at any time to see how the Grosvenor was being conducted. Giles did not agree

with the rule although his interest in the classes kept him to it. He asked, 'Who chooses these inspectors of education? Does someone in the office say, "I have a friend. He is not particularly good at anything; do you think he could be fitted in as an inspector of education?".'

Our eleven-week summer closure was very unpopular with students and staff, as it cut into the summer programme and was altogether too long. The group were told that they would have to convince the local education committee that a shorter closure was both educationally and financially sound. Giles said, 'Let us first take the arguments against the shorter closure. If we can meet the arguments against our own case, we should be able to be convincing.' Once a possible trip to France was being considered. The Steward said she would only want eleven or twelve in the party. 'Oh, a little older than that for Paris, surely,' Giles suggested. The Steward replied that perhaps if she did take 11- and 12-year-olds she would have less anxiety as to what they were up to in Paris. Kit, with his inconvenient memory of all the Baron had ever said, intervened at this point with an earnest reminder, 'The Baron has observed sex interest in very young children in junior schools, so you would have plenty to worry about with that age.'

On another occasion Will was saying how bad it was to be shy. Giles said, 'I have passed the same girl on my way to work each morning for a year. It took her three months to smile and nine months to say "good morning", and the first day she spoke to me she blushed.' There was laughter at this, and Buster said that at that rate you would be tired of a girl before you had spoken to her.

Giles' one insecurity was health. When he passed his army medical at 18 he began to look healthier than we had ever known him. It was a weight off his mind. He found army life interesting, and went to the Far East and Korea, returning in 1952. Before he went he had a short love affair with Norah, and he took Cynthia out once or twice, and then he found an arty type of girl called Sasha, who had more in common with him. Asked whether she had a Russian grandfather, he admitted that her grandfather had been an 'Irish gardener'. He had a habit of seeing himself objectively and his anecdotes and sallies were never

intrusions of autobiography; they always came as the illustration of some more general point. In the group his talent for polite insult was greatly missed. He would remove the bottom from an argument as if he were merely offering a copy of *Pilgrim's Progress* because the customer had asked for *The Water Babies* which was temporarily out of print.

When Norah joined the group she was 14, although she looked older, being pretty and very well developed. She had no difficulties with written work, and interviewing was meat and drink to her. For a time Giles and she were fast friends, as we have said, and they were inseparable at one Whitsun camp. She invited him home where she lived with her widowed mother, and very soon her mother invited Giles to call her 'Mother', which, he informed the Baron, 'decided me it was time to quit. I'm not so serious so soon.'

Norah had spent a year in hospital with a pleural effusion, and her father had died young of some chest complaint. Her mother worked during the day and her grandmother, who lived near them, looked after her while her mother was away. She, like Giles, was anxious about her health, although she had no other obvious fears. The Brains Trust was her sounding-board. All that she said was coloured by her awareness of every male in the room. She treated her most intimate life with a candour that set a standard of frankness and undoubtedly encouraged the others not to be self-conscious. Two of her contributions to a discussion on reading habits are typical. Asked what she read, her reply was: 'I spend up to 3s. a week on romances, and I buy *Red Star*, *Silver Star* and all the other *Stars*. My mother says I shouldn't read such rubbish, but I often catch her reading them when she thinks I am not around. I enjoy love stories; it is a way of getting experience when you are beginning to have love affairs yourself. You feel this might happen to you and, if the story is well written, you are not frightened of the future. It can't be wrong, can it, to want experience in this sort of way?'

She was at this time preoccupied with love affairs, although in front of important visitors, such as civic dignitaries or inspectors, she could appear to be entirely preoccupied with art or embroidery. When discussing whether girls had as great a power of concentration as boys, or whether they were not too interested

in getting a boy friend to have energy left for other hobbies, she said, 'Most girls do hunt, I admit. I myself come up here to meet boys. Art is my excuse.' Outside the group she dominated whatever person or set she was with. She caused havoc with male hearts. Her first love affair was with Percy. His affection for her went very deep at the time, and he admitted a year after she had departed from the Grosvenor, 'I am sometimes surprised myself at all I felt for that girl.'

Her success in so many ways led her to try to dominate the Brains Trust, and she needed an adroit reminder that others also had views to express, and that she should avoid a too frequent tendency to diverge into personalities. For a year she contributed a lively wit and the value of another extrovert intelligence to our deliberations. Then she fell in love with a Scot in a kilt whom she met in Hyde Park one summer evening when the Grosvenor was closed. From that time her thoughts were only on marriage. She was invited to bring the new boy friend to meet us but she always found some excuse not to come. As he was 22 and she was 15, she probably thought the Grosvenor would remind him of how young she really was. During her stormy year with us she could, by just entering a room where boys were working hard at some hobby, disturb the whole group. Many times she disintegrated the pottery and clay modelling class in this way, taking the attention of some six or seven boys and going off for a walk with them. She was the only girl in a summer sketching party taken by the Steward to St. Paul's Cathedral. A few boys had really come to sketch and they settled themselves on a bomb site and set to work. Not so Norah. She diverted everyone who could be interrupted, and she even tried to divert those who were determined to draw. The one who worked most consistently, despite all her efforts to distract him, was afterwards found to have homosexual leanings. On the way home she started to play leap-frog over the stone pillars at the edge of the semi-circular foreground of the cathedral. The boys were delighted to do likewise. Norah was warned that a skirt was not the safest dress for this form of exercise, but she ignored all advice till her skirt caught and she fell. She had a black eye for days. The blow was softened by a young policeman hurrying to the spot and anointing her eye with iodine.

Her quick change from a woman greedy for love to a little girl playing leap-frog is typical of the whole army of adolescents. We had another girl who was bringing a case in the courts against an older man for rape. Two days before she was to be seen letting off fireworks in her street, happy with the other children.

Bertha took Norah's place when she left the Brains Trust, and we knew her over a far longer period. Both girls had been educated in the same school. Later Bertha secured an entrance to a technical college, and when we first knew her she was just 14. She was frank and outspoken and usually purposeful in her activities, so that she spoke truly when she said, 'I come to the Grosvenor on certain nights to do definite things.' In the Brains Trust her natural poise and frankness became more polished and her reasoning powers sharpened. Her father had been crippled in the engineering works where he was employed, and he had had to become a newspaper seller. Her mother worked too. She adored and admired her father but her mother sometimes seemed to irritate her, and then she would be full of remorse because she thought she ought to admire her mother more. She had suffered from stern and over-respectable school teachers, and the Baron seemed to her a welcome change. Discussing religion one day she said, 'A lot of religious people seem to distrust happiness.' She liked reading, and anything from John Buchan to her little brother's comic would appeal to her. Sometimes she used to write an essay for the Steward. One was about an imaginary holiday in a lighthouse. The real interest of this essay was its clear indication of her chief preoccupation at that time. It was typical of girls of her age as her interest was centred in herself. She described the clothes she would wear, and how she would feel about living away from a town; in fact it was all about her and very little was said about the lighthouse. When the Steward suggested that she might have tried to imagine and describe life in a lighthouse she was amazed and said, 'Well, if you want to learn about life in a lighthouse, why ask *me*? I've never been in a lighthouse and I can only tell you about myself. If you are more interested to know about a lighthouse, you had better ask someone who lives in one.' Its logic was unanswerable, as the logic of these children so often was.

When Bertha left school she tried several jobs in the catering

trade. She absented herself from the Grosvenor for nearly a year soon after she obtained her second job, and lived an intense personal life with at least one poignant love affair. This phase of her life, like that of so many adolescents, cannot by its nature be observed enough. When Bertha and her friend re-joined the Grosvenor in 1952 they were just in time for the casting of parts for a play, and entered into dramatics with real zest. She was then working as cashier in a chemist's shop. This absence and sudden return after many months was typical of these young people.

Simon joined our community in 1949 when he was 16 and was working as an apprentice saddler. He had a talent for art and many interests; fishing was one. He had attended the same school as had many of our boys, including Arthur, although for part of the war he and his family had lived out of London. His interest in his work was broad and embraced everything to do with horses, from Stubbs' paintings to the study of old-fashioned veterinary lore. His first attempt at clay modelling was a head of a horse. For some weeks in 1950 he, like the girls we mentioned, made no appearance at the Grosvenor at all. When he did return, he owned that he had been playing snooker all the time he was not at work, and he was surprised at how good he had become. The Baron suggested that to engage in any one activity all the time was excessive, and he was invited into the Brains Trust. Months later he admitted, 'You said I needed to balance snooker with some other activity so I've stuck to the Brains Trust.' In 1951 he found a girl friend at the Grosvenor and he had an added reason for coming. This affair lasted and ended in marriage. His was a cheerful disposition. He came from a happy home. He was tall and well-made, while his father, whom he greatly admired, was a short man who was tolerant and good humoured. Simon could take teasing for, as he said, a joke made life brighter. In 1952 the Grosvenor Glee Club gave a show that was pronounced on many sides to be very good, but the young reporter in the local paper gave it a poor write-up. Many of the cast, including Tom Shelley the manager of our Glee Club, were very angry. Simon said, 'It is no good showing we are angry. Let us write a letter and guy this reporter. Could we say we are amateur and proud of it, and

he judged us by professional standards, and our hall as if it were the Palladium? I can't write, but we might add that, although we like to be amateurs ourselves, we prefer less amateur reports.' They wrote, and got the letter signed by several leading members of the cast. There were arguments as to whether irony should be used to express anger, but throughout it all Simon never lost his kindly smile. He had little intolerance. Once he confessed that he had not been to church for four years but he decided to accompany his mother on an Easter Sunday and, 'I enjoyed the service. I found I got a real kick out of it.' He followed Robert for some time as our representative on the local Council of Youth. His girl friend served with him. At camp both of them were really interested in the local countryside and the historic buildings. They walked in all weathers.

Many members of the group, it will be noticed, though not all, were in good trades, and perhaps the need to acquire skill in work made them ready for the further discipline of reasoning implied in membership of the Brains Trust. These are short descriptions of some of our most effective members. There were many others; some who came to the Grosvenor for one or two years and drifted off, either to a less purposeful or a more purposeful atmosphere. Such were Tess and Ursula, who were keen ballroom dancers, danced in competitions and were keen on dramatic work. They were interested in personal problems connected with love affairs, and for a time they came to the group. Then one joined a travelling theatre company and the other went to a stage school.

Kate was a sweet Irish girl, a friend of Helen. She was a keen member for a year and her written reports were excellent. Then she became engaged to a boy who had been involved in some homosexual trouble, and she and he ceased to come to the Grosvenor. Her success with her young boy-friend was as quietly competent and effortless as her work in our group.

We had, late in 1951, another newcomer, a girl of high intelligence who, like Norah, was entirely preoccupied with sex. Unlike Norah, she had little capacity for affection and was unmoved by appeals to her better nature or by any thought of the distress she would cause her parents. She had a respectable home; her father had been an N.C.O. in the regular army. She soon con-

tracted out of our group; she did not want to probe her own motives or have them explained. Despite all warnings, she went on the streets before her last term at day-school was up. The thing about her that upset the others was not her irregular behaviour but the fact that it was commercial. The majority were idealistic and they disliked mercenary girls.

Ralph was a keen member but only for a short time, as he went overseas with his army unit soon after he joined up. He made a serious and useful contribution. He had been permanently affected by life in the country during evacuation, and constantly referred to the difference in outlook and pursuits between town and country. In all his letters from his postings he asked with affection how was the 'B.T.' getting on. He had been interested in art and drama and carried on the latter interest by entering into dramatics in the Far East. A typical extract from one of his letters received early in 1953 reads: 'How is the B.T. progressing lately? I hope it still holds the same interest it held for me when I left. I can't join anything like it out here. It is very interesting to meet all sorts of people and discuss all sorts of things like you do at the Grosvenor. . . . With the co-operation of the education centre I am starting a classical music group. . . .'

For a time we ran special groups to discuss emotional problems with a young medical psychologist. We attempted to evolve a system of group therapy through the discussion of certain fears and obsessions, as well as of behaviour problems such as the tendency to ridicule one's fellows. Some of the material collected in these groups will be used in the next two chapters, and in Chapter Seven.

The Brains Trust met weekly to discuss a special topic or a piece of work they had just completed or were about to undertake. They gradually became known and were asked to assist in a small way in outside pieces of research, such as that of Joseph Trenarmon, into youth programmes on the B.B.C. All visitors who wanted help from the group were welcome, as well as those, such as Miss Eileen Younghusband, who just came to see what they did. They co-operated with surveys on documentary and entertainment films, youth employment service and its publicity, absenteeism in factories, wastage in informal education, juvenile delinquency and sex education, to name a few. These 'outside

jobs' served as a visible standard by which to judge their work and its importance, and a curb on too parochial an approach to it. We hoped it made education more a part of life and less static; it was what Jacquetta Hawkes has called 'our participation in process'.

Chapter Four

RESEARCH CONTINUES

> 'In the street you learn what human beings really are; otherwise and afterwards you invent them. What is not in the open street is false, derived, that is to say literature.'
>
> *Black Spring*, HENRY MILLER

An early task of the self-study group was to interview members of the Grosvenor who had not been attending classes, and, in most cases, had not been seen about the building for the past three weeks. Interviewers were to ascertain what these absentees had been doing instead of coming to the Institute, and lists of people to visit were distributed to members of the Brains Trust.

This interviewing was difficult as, when a member called at the home of an absentee during the evening, he or she was liable to be out, and this would entail their making several visits in each case. George had a lot of difficulty in discovering one of his 'contacts'. This particular boy had asked the Steward if she could get him some modelling clay as he wished to make a bust of Mr. Churchill. The day after this clay was made available to members this boy disappeared and was not seen again for seven weeks. George discovered that he had temporarily deserted the Grosvenor for a girl and that this absorbing love affair was taking up all his spare time. This was typical of many other cases. It is possible that these short, sudden, and often painful love affairs are as necessary to growth and development as formal and informal education.

George noted that he asked a boy at his work what he did with his spare time, and as a result the boy made enquiries and found a youth organisation for himself. As George added, 'My questioning aroused his interest to the point of finding some leisure-time occupation on his own account.'

Will often appended a personal comment to his reports as seen below:

'A— was working on night shift on railways; he said irregular hours prevent him attending P.T. class at Grosvenor. (My personal impression is that he lacks enthusiasm.)

'B— otherwise engaged full-time; serving His Majesty the King in prison, convicted of assault (see Chapter Seven, Case 13).

'C— claims to speak for many of his generation when he says he has "wanderlust". Grosvenor only satisfied him for a time. "Until something more exciting turned up." Something more exciting which, though they all expect it, they find it hard to define.'

Owen had to visit Tim who had lapsed for several months. Tim was the subject of Case 34 in Chapter Seven; he was perpetually hard up at the Grosvenor and at camp. At the summer camp before Owen had to interview him he had got into debt with several other campers. He had not returned to the Grosvenor that September. Six weeks later when Owen called to find out why, he reported, 'Tim says he works late. He has joined the —— church youth club. As this costs him more than the Grosvenor (1s. 6d. a week) it must be because his girl goes there.'

This is interesting as it shows the combination of reasons that lead one boy to stay away from his evening institute. He had a girl friend at the new church club, he had creditors at the Grosvenor, and he said he had to work late which was a very common excuse for staying away from classes. There was some truth in all three reasons. Eventually he returned to the Grosvenor in time to go to the next summer camp and he was required to pay off all his debts which he did.

Irene interviewed a girl who explained that she had no friend to come to the Grosvenor with; the girl she had been in the habit of going around with had now got a boy friend and all her other friends were just under 14 and not eligible for membership. She couldn't come up by herself so she stayed away. This was a common reason given by girls. In the summer of 1952 Rose stayed away for some time because she said she had no special friend 'up at the Grosvenor now'. Shyness does have a great

effect on the attendance of girls, and they show a reluctance to go even to a friendly place alone. Once when the Steward called for volunteers to make jam for the canteen on a summer evening, girls who were standing looking out of windows with apparently nothing to do said they could not make jam 'unless my friend will make it too when she comes'. If there is this reluctance to go to a friendly cookery centre without one special friend, how much more effect must a sense of loneliness have on a girl in the street who tries to pluck up courage to join some recreation centre, but cannot face making that first entry!

Tilly found considerable resistance to questioning in one of her girl 'contacts'. This girl said she had left the Grosvenor as she got bored and fed up. Tilly handed in a typed report of the conversation that ensued:

ME (Tilly): Why did you leave the Grosvenor?
SHEILA: That's my worry, not yours.
ME: (I do a little tactful talking and ask what she does instead.)
SHEILA: I do all sorts of other things.
ME: Such as?
SHEILA: Well, on Mondays I sometimes go to the pictures.
ME: On Tuesday?
SHEILA: You are a nosey lot, aren't you? Sometimes I stay in.
ME: What do you do when you don't?
SHEILA: You'd be surprised.
ME: What about Wednesday?
SHEILA: I go around with my friend.
ME: Who is your friend?
SHEILA: No one you know.
ME: What about Thursday?
SHEILA: I go all over the place.
ME: Where's that?
SHEILA: Who do you think you are? What is this, anyway?
ME: Friday and Saturday?
SHEILA: Friday pictures, and Saturday I am trying to take up dancing but my friend is always moaning.
ME: Sunday, what about that?
SHEILA: Oh, pictures.
ME: Proper fan, aren't you?

SHEILA: Mind your own business.
COMMENT: And somebody said this was easy.

The dialogue shows how every now and again the girl Sheila nearly thaws and becomes confidential. Tilly thought there was a boy in the background somewhere or a possessive girl friend. Sheila was on the defensive and kept her secret, but like all girls of her age she was really wanting to tell somebody about it. If this girl was so aggressively reticent with Tilly, one can imagine what she would be like with a strange adult who tried to interview her.

When we organised outings so that the group could collect data on some question, we did so primarily in order to help them to discover for themselves the need for an objective approach to the problems of knowledge and opinion. The need to go out to look for facts corrected an over-emotional approach to ideas. Such training induces a habit of taking trouble to discover the truth, and of applying oneself to a specific task, despite the difficulty involved. Bit by bit they grew to learn that there is no easy way to knowledge, even about so absorbing a topic as themselves. They learned this, not by being told, but by finding it out for themselves on a job. Going out was also a kind of treat for them and something of an adventure, and therefore the effort necessary to collect facts before forming an over-hasty conclusion was seen to have its own attraction.

For example, when the Irish ballroom dancing instructor made a dogmatic statement that ice-skating was ousting ballroom dancing from its position as a popular pastime we used it as an opportunity for a little 'field' survey. The group visited an ice rink and questioned those they found there. The occasion of this visit was anticipated with much excitement. We discussed together the approach they should make to other skaters, and they helped to prepare a set of questions. This was a chance to combine training in accurate observation with pleasure, as they would all skate, and their entrance fee would be paid by the Baron. But although the trip was going to be fun, the information that the questions were designed to secure had to be found. And next week their report would be discussed and a jealous watch kept on them by the rest of the group. It was all very

serious work on a topic that had immediate interest for them. Once they reached the rink, all tried to skate but none evaded their task. Their different techniques were interesting to watch. Tilly first approached a couple on the ice and said, 'I have a few questions I should like to ask you.' The couple thus accosted giggled. Tilly drew herself up to her full height on her skates and said, 'Thank you, I've changed my mind.' And off she sped. The two were by now curious and pursued her, asking what she wanted, but she would not relent. She said she only wanted those who would give a serious answer.

Will on the other hand made a thorough and serious report, and each person whom he questioned was given a number, with sex and approximate age appended. Here is a specimen from his batch:

> 'Subject 5 (male, approx. 18)
>
> Although he went to dances at intervals he preferred skating for the following reasons:
>
> 1. It is a solo form of entertainment.
> 2. It is exercise.
> 3. Rowdiness is hardly ever apparent at a rink (note that it was at dance halls).
> 4. Skating is more amusing in so far as you can have a laugh at people's antics without being thought ill-mannered.
> 5. Finally, being a thrill merchant, he found that ice hockey matches supplied these much better than a dancing exhibition.
>
> This last subject I think summed up for me just what the others had said individually.
>
> One thing we must consider before making any decision on the questions under discussion is, were we the victims of circumstances? I think we are all agreed that if we had asked everyone in the Rink whether they preferred dancing or ice-skating, the answer would have been the latter. But if we had done exactly the same thing at a dance hall, what would that result have been? Personally, if I might be allowed to express an opinion, I am attracted to ice-skating much more than I am to dancing. My two reasons are (1) I cannot see any value,

either for health or entertainment, in dancing; (2) Ice-skating is far more novel.'

Ice-skating also appealed to the serious George, who said in his report, 'Ice-skating is first class fun as anybody can join in or watch. There were people of all ages on the ice and it seemed to me that only some of the learners were not enjoying the sport. One man of 36 I talked to said he would like to see more rinks in London, with some reserved for beginners.'

Owen, who had been ice-skating since the age of 7 and disliked dancing, was sure that a lot more work would be needed before any reliable conclusion could be drawn. When Buster quoted some figures from a dancing newspaper to prove the popularity of dancing, George reminded him that a specialist paper might be biased.

All were not uniformly good on surveys, and those who were good on some occasions let us down on others. Buster broke down on a survey of cafés, undertaken to discover how far they were used as meeting places instead of evening institutes or youth clubs, and especially how far they were used to plan juvenile crime. The group were to visit specified cafés as far apart as the Elephant and Castle and Tottenham Court Road. They were to note numbers present, ages, sexes, and topics of talk overheard. If possible they were to get into casual conversation while in the café. Then the whole party would meet the Baron in some central café and talk over their experiences. Right at the outset of this particular evening someone had sworn at Buster. 'Filthy language,' he told the Baron reproachfully. There possibly was a swear word that he did not know and use but this is doubtful. Nevertheless, had he been reared in a ladies' finishing school in the nineties he could not have appeared more scandalised. His pride had been affronted, and his confidence sapped, by this unexpected rebuff. A difficulty of this sort must be dealt with promptly as soon as it arises, so as to prevent a passing rancour crystallising into an attitude of frustration. If the personal sting is at once taken out of such an incident it will be seen as no more than a momentary mishap, with no lasting significance or effect on future work.

On this particular evening Tilly and Catherine had arrived

too late to carry out their instructions and they came straight to meet the Baron. They insisted on making up their assignment of work on another night. They did not want to let the group down or miss the chance of doing this particular piece of work as, with most young people, the lure of the café is strong, and the task of observing a café gives an intellectual excuse for frequenting a popular haunt.

A week or two before this survey was made by the Brains Trust, Guy was sent out to make 'pilot' surveys of cafés and pin-table saloons—which the group next surveyed. Guy was seen in Chapter One and he was, for a time, leader of our 'gang'. He and a friend visited cafés first and pin-table saloons later, at the week-ends; whereas the visits of the Brains Trust members were on week nights, not week-ends. He had not been trained with the rest of the group but the novelty of being asked to do some investigation made him accept with alacrity. His work gave him an opportunity of identifying himself with the law and the detection of crime rather than with its perpetration.

Extracts from his reports are:

'—— *cafe, Sunday—February.* Enter three boys, all just out of the pictures; two girls with them; film seen *Scott of the Antarctic.* Girls talked about picture. Boys ask girls if they want anything to eat. They had met in the pictures. Boys were about 15 and they asked girls if they could take them out. Girls agreed, and one boy walked off and left two pairs. A few guards were in the café with girls. Time spent in café 8.45 to 9.30. Cost 2s.; 6d. change out of half-a-crown given us by the Baron.'

Below is his report of 45 minutes spent in a pin-table saloon on a Saturday:

'Fifteen to twenty persons in arcade standing around Juke Box. We two separated and stood on each side of a group of five boys who had been to a dance and were talking about it. They were 15–17 years old. They had met some girls at the dance and had dated them at Notting Hill Gate at 9 p.m. on the next Sunday. We moved to Juke Box. Saw four boys and three girls who had come in separately meet up. Boys asked girls if they danced a lot and would they like to go to a dance that night. Girls refused and said they had a date with Guardsmen at 8.15.

Girls were 14–17 years. On way out saw ten boys collected just outside arcade—they were talking about clothes. One boy had a drape suit and the rest admired it. These boys were alone as girls around mostly go out with Guardsmen.'

These two reports contrasted with week-day reports of visits to pin-table saloons. Kit had noted in his account of a Wednesday evening visit, '. and all the time I was there I never heard a girl's name mentioned.' It appears possible that pin-table saloons are used much more for week-end dating before going to a dance or after coming out of the pictures, and they are used by girls who want to 'pick up' men. Boys who want to hear the latest records usually go to listen to the Juke Box but girls go more rarely for this purpose. We found Marion started a fashion for going at one point. Later another girl used to frequent a pin-table saloon with her girl friend, before she ran away from home and went on the streets.

Tilly had an interesting experience in a pin-table saloon shortly after we had taken her to survey them. She came into the office one evening and said that she had had a surprising meeting with someone who called herself a research worker. During the week-end she and a girl-friend had been listening to the speakers in Hyde Park (a popular week-end pastime), when it began to rain, and they ran along Edgware Road and took shelter in a pin-table saloon. Why they ran so far for shelter when there were many nearer alternatives Tilly did not explain. She was herself no stranger to this haunt but her friend, whom she described as an 'innocent-looking girl', was horrified at being taken inside such a place. No sooner were they inside than Tilly recognised a group of boys with whom she had once been in the habit of going cycling. One of these boys was coloured and he, Tilly asserts, had by far the best manners of any of them. She went over to these boys and they all gossiped together at the end of the arcade. After a while she went to the front of the saloon to look out and see if it had stopped raining. While alone there she was accosted by, to quote her, 'a lady of something over 40 and a boy of about 20 who looked a college type.' Her narrative continues:

'These two stopped me and said they were interested in juvenile delinquency. She did most of the talking, although she

mentioned that she was making an *enquiry*. She warned me that it was a very bad habit to go into pin-table saloons, and that I might pick up some very bad boys there, and that I might land myself in for more than I bargained. The boy who was with her said that to look at me you would not think I was the type to go regularly to pin-table saloons, but when he saw me flounce in and go straight up to that crowd of strange boys, he realised just how brazen I really was. Such interference by a stranger made me a bit mad, but I politely explained that I had only gone in there to shelter from the rain and happened to meet that crowd of boys whom I knew in there. She did not believe me but asked in rather a nagging voice what attraction could a place like that have for a girl like me. I decided that if she wanted lies she had better have some so I gave her a story. I told her that once I had won some money on a machine and this had given me the urge to gamble. She wrote all this down in her little book. When I saw her writing lies I had a twinge of conscience and I told her to cross that out as it was only my little joke. I too was interested in social studies and had made a survey of pin-table saloons with my evening institute. When I told the truth she stopped writing it down and looked very stern indeed, and said, "You have a very vivid imagination."

'After this she lectured me about going around with coloured boys. I said I did not believe in colour prejudice, we were all British; this particular boy had better manners than many white boys I knew. She asked where I lived and said she supposed I hung about the saloons there. I said as a matter of fact I attended my Institute. She asked what sort of place that was, adding, she supposed it was one of these bebop and jive dives. When I said it was well known and called the Grosvenor she asked my name. I said my name was Tilly Grosvenor and she wouldn't believe it could be the same as the name of the Institute. When she asked for my address and I said I lived in Grosvenor Walk she thought I was lying again. It is strange that there should be so many Grosvenors connected with me, but it is one of those strange true things. She couldn't believe in odd coincidence. She then took my girl friend aside and warned her against going with a girl like me as I was a bad influence. I had no lipstick on at all as we had just been on the river at Richmond and come on to

Hyde Park Corner without stopping to make ourselves up. Having warned my girl friend she went up to the boys, and one of them, who is a bit of a leg-puller, said, "What are you selling, missus?" She didn't smile at that but said no boys would ever meet nice girls "in a place like this" if that was what they were after. One boy looked her up and down—she was over 40 as I have said before—and answered her, "Well... I don't know...".'

This technique was a flagrant example of how not to get the truth from youth. It is no use asking questions if we have already made up our minds what are the real answers. We have all the time to be prepared for the shock of the unexpected truth; we have to be sure we are writing down the truth and not a piece of embroidery which the adolescent has invented for us, partly to put us off and partly for fun and the enjoyment of misleading those who think they know better. As Tilly reiterated more in sorrow than in anger, 'Whenever we told the truth she wouldn't believe us, but whenever we gave her a whacking great lie she wrote it down in her book.'

One evening Tilly came into the office saying she was 'bored stiff', a complaint which the girls made more commonly than the boys. She didn't know why she was bored or what she could do to cure her depression. The Baron was just off to visit the Crescent, our other branch, and he invited Tilly to accompany him. On the bus he asked Tilly why she was bored and noted down all she said in reply. On the way back he also noted down her report on the Crescent, which seems relevant to the more official surveys of 'other clubs' made by the self-study group. Tilly explained: 'My friend Mabel used to come to the Grosvenor with me; now I am not so sure she is my friend. She thought I had been talking about her to some other girls. She didn't ask me for an explanation before believing rumours. I said that if she could really believe that, as her friend, I would talk about her behind her back she couldn't trust me as she should a real friend. It isn't loyal.' Her concern at what she took to be a betrayal of trust by a friend illustrates the fragile, but very real, idealism of adolescence. If this apparently trivial idealism is shattered, the capacity for greater and wider faith in life and the world may go with it. At this stage there is a wide chasm

Mann Bros.

Rehearsing a scene from OTHELLO in the Drama Class

Mann Bros.

Musical appreciation by participation

'The Observed Observing'

Mann Bros.

'Just the right book' — private study in the library

between a friend and an acquaintance. Without a friend a girl is often completely lost in an office, an evening class or a youth group. Moods and so-called boredom are often an unconscious reaction to some emotional disappointment.

Having revealed what she thought to be the cause of her mood, Tilly went on to discuss her home and her work, thereby disclosing other sources of anxiety. She, like so many young girls, had dreamed of going on the stage. In reality, when she left school she stayed at home for a year to look after the younger children and then took an office job. Here she was put to work in a room with one other much older woman worker. She admitted that she was quite well paid and the job had prospects, but she sighed for a more sociable office with younger people in it. Her mother advised her to settle down, accused her of being a chatterbox, and suggested that she only liked the best parts of anything and was not prepared to take the boring parts as well. She listened to this advice, disregarded it, gave in her notice and found work as a filing clerk in an office where she worked with several other girls in one large room. Although the pay was less she preferred the job, but she was still restless and remained so for many years. She said she wanted the chance to meet a lot of other young people, solemnly adding that she thought everyone needed a lot of change. In this she probably spoke for the whole regiment of adolescents. Of course none of them want the boring parts of life. Did we at that age?

On the particular evening when Tilly and the Baron arrived at the Crescent Tilly was encouraged to go where she liked; she made straight for the boys' physical training class. On the way home after the visit she gave the following impressions of this other branch of the Institute.

'I mustn't really criticise,' she said with a smug seriousness, 'but it is different from the Grosvenor. There the feeling is free and easy and there is a good spirit among the boys and girls. Here they don't seem to mix much and they seem embarrassed at a visitor. The Crescent is a nice club but there's not enough life in it. People go about as if they are not interested in it. There is not enough laughing. The office is better than ours, as an office. They seem to have better classes than we do and to be keen on them. The staff are more stand-offish than ours. The

Steward likes friendliness, so do you, but these people seem to like control or something.'

This first impression is quoted at length as it shows considerable discrimination. Here was a girl obviously absorbed in her own personal problems at home and at work, and concerned with emotional problems of her relations with boys and with her girl friends. Here in fact is a typically moody adolescent on an evening when she is depressed. Yet taken out and questioned she is able to give a detached and surprisingly objective report of another branch of the Institute. It will be noticed that she instinctively sought out a boys' class to inspect first, showing a normal interest in boys, but when she was not made as welcome as she would have desired she did not allow herself to be put off or affronted, but instead she tried to assess the strange atmosphere of the place. Training in observing behaviour had probably developed her natural ability to size up a new situation, for she noticed the amenities of the building, the attitude of the staff, and the manners of the students, as well as the size of the classes.

No doubt she relied to some extent on intuition to get the real feel of the place, but as a piece of 'observation' her little summary was a great deal better than that of one of H.M. Inspectors of Education who visited this place a few weeks later and seemed to like the rather genteel set-up she found there. When the Baron informed her of his difficulty over the Crescent, saying that it lacked vitality and that the so-called 'submerged tenth' were not being drawn in or educated there at all, the inspector asked him what he meant. It seemed pleasing enough to her with its well-attended classes and its attitude of proper respect towards the staff, just as in the girls' high school which she had probably attended. The fact that for over four years hardly any human problems were ever brought to the staff of this branch had its effect when trouble did break out, as it did very seriously on occasion. Then the veneer of 'proper respect' in place of intimate knowledge and trust between staff and students added to the difficulties. Education for each small group of adolescents must arise naturally out of the process of growing up and learning to live. Experience of this kind must largely develop outside the formal class where a lecturer talks and a student listens. In

fact an organisation that seems neat and tidy to a visitor with an upper middle class background may, in effect, be neither acceptable to the young nor generally educational. This is possibly why some social work proves abortive.

On several occasions the group were taken to visit youth clubs and report on what went on there; they had to ask members what they did with the time not spent in the club, and what their friends outside did also. As we noticed at camps, most of our members had a great respect for order, fairness, and a sort of discipline. They often upbraided us for the apparent lack of order at the Grosvenor, and for being too soft with trouble-makers other than themselves. Yet when reporting upon discipline in other clubs they showed a certain caution and reserve.

Buster, in his notes on a church club, wrote, 'From what I gathered this club and its members are very nice, but I think they are cowed down a bit by the people who run it. Most of the boys and girls come every night and the club is open from Monday to Friday. I only met one boy who didn't come every night and he went to night school. In order to belong to this club you have to go to church on Sunday. After evening service each Sunday the club is open for those who have attended it.'

It was interesting that not one of the members questioned by our team as to their reason for joining this club gave religion. Some 75 per cent cited ballroom dancing. Slim was very taken with the 'house' system in operation there, but although he had mainly praise in his report he was a little uneasy as to the discipline, saying, 'The club seems very well organised. It may be seen that if anyone made any trouble, out they go. No messing . . .'. Tilly was not amused by this club which she said was 'too like a school', and what she said to Slim for liking the 'house' system was very forceful.

Of another mixed youth club they visited Norah made a cutting comment, reporting, 'It was interesting as a youth club. I had a long talk to a young boy of about 30 who seemed fairly representative. The youngest boy up there, the real baby, was 17.'

TILLY: The ones I questioned were 19, 20 and 23. Despite their age they didn't seem to do much. They had a lot to say about

what they used to do. They said something of things they hoped to do in future but nothing about what they were doing now.
CATHERINE: There was a man of 27 who went there to do weight-lifting on one night a week and to hang about on other nights. They all liked dancing. They asked us to a dance.
CUTHBERT: One girl had an unusual hobby—gardening.
TILLY: Emil was a nice boy. He liked table tennis, swimming, ice hockey and girls. He was 20.

This particular club had been Oswald's Waterloo. He had looked at the members present and said he could never ask these people anything. It may have been the wide age-range that upset him. To have members in their teens and those in their late twenties has certain disadvantages unless care is taken to see that all have a chance to take responsibility. Yet girls need older boys as they tend to link themselves to boys some years older. A too short age-range will not be satisfactory to the girls and it has the added disadvantage of preventing the staff from observing individuals develop and grow up and from dealing with them in the light of a real knowledge of them. There is no easy answer to the question of age-range for an adolescent community. There is a good deal to be said for welcoming members back for a year or so after their term in the Forces is finished so that they can re-adapt themselves to the adult civilian world in sympathetic surroundings.

The danger of letting power get into the hands of any particular group must be avoided. In a week-end conversation with a young lad the Baron was given a post-mortem on a church youth club where power had got into the hands of a few dominant personalities. Then they left one by one, either to join the Forces, or on account of a girl friend in another town, or because, having become all-powerful, they lacked further interest. With the loss of these dominant types the general attendance was falling off too. The leader of the organisation had leaned on those few energetic youngsters and become 'lazy'. The younger members had only had the chance to be rowdy outlaws; they had been treated as kids, and had been pushed out of most organised activities, and now they were not ready to take on responsibility. Sometimes a club never recovers from such a stage.

The younger ones find it flat when they have no organised background for horseplay, and return to the streets.

This analysis by a boy of 17 shows certain dangers in the granting of responsibility in an adolescent community, and would repay careful research. It may be that this irresponsibility in a slightly younger group which is not given its due share of responsibility may be paralleled in many families where the younger son is often in trouble and the elder son is an outstanding success.

In 1951 it was proposed to visit some more youth clubs and to report on how they were working. Edgar suggested that we drew up a set of questions before we went. These were to be shared among the group. After they had decided what each should ask Edgar suddenly said:

'We had better see that we can all answer these questions about the Grosvenor before we go expecting outsiders to reply to them about other places. How many people in this room can say what facilities we have in this Institute, what activities, what obligations and what sort of leadership? Come on Kate, what obligations have our members? And Helen, tell us what facilities we have.'

When Helen, with some hesitation, mentioned sports equipment and a hall for dancing, Edgar impatiently took her to task, saying, 'What hesitation! That's hopeless! The L.C.C. provide for our use a large up-to-date building with three halls and the use of what classrooms we need, together with plenty of first-rate equipment, some of which has been wasted in the past so they have tightened up on supplies. The facilities provided are such that over 200 people are willing to accept both the financial and educational obligations of membership.'

Edgar was not the only member of the group who displayed powers of self-criticism. This outburst of his was typical of many who thought we should put our own house in order before assessing other institutions, although not everyone was as succinct in definition or as quick in getting down to fundamentals. For one who had come bottom in an intelligence test Edgar displayed a delightful intolerance of hesitation or stupidity.

The group collaborated with others in a research project on youth radio programmes, and at the end of the work, which

lasted some months, they were invited to Broadcasting House. On their return Edgar suggested that five or six young people from a youth group in a dormitory suburb be invited to a session of the Brains Trust. The request was gladly granted, and five boys and three girls turned up. We naturally did not expect the same degree of candour in a group of strangers new to us and to the technique of frank enquiry, but we were astonished by the fact that many of these newcomers seemed to find the truth so uncomfortable. One vivacious girl denied that she had ever joined a youth group to meet boys, or that sex in any way underlay her enjoyment of boys' company. Hers were 'intellectual friendships' she said, although the last book she had read was *The Forsyte Saga* and that six months ago. When they were invited to come another night by the Steward, who suggested that they might like to sample a dancing as well as a talking session, they unanimously elected to come to another meeting of the Brains Trust. Presumably they welcomed the chance to discuss emotional problems with even oblique references to sex, although they strongly denied having even a passing interest in the subject —at least all but one boy.

A similar case was when a women's civic group from a dormitory suburb came to discuss parents with the Brains Trust. A vigorous and controversial discussion took place. Our visitors were adventurous. Several of them were women of wide interests who had a zest for knowledge, but even so they fell into the habit of repeating clichés without corroborative facts. Once or twice a few of our older members, such as Robert, led the conversation away from a dangerous topic. For instance, when the group raised the subject of the anxiety felt by a mother if her elder children arrived home very late at night, Robert said that being out late did not always mean that they were making love to some girl; he and his friends had stood on the corner near the Grosvenor one night recently discussing inter-planetary travel. This was perfectly true, relevant and interesting, but whether consciously or not, Robert had led the conversation away from any inconvenient revelations of a sexual kind. None of the visiting party tried to prevent this skilful re-direction of the conversation even if they noticed it. A trained sociologist came along with the group and the young people were more at home with

her than with these suburban mothers. It is possible that a technique is needed to train older persons to seek truth first and to base opinion only upon ascertained fact.

Whether a severe training in seeking truth, and not making hasty generalisations, remains a discipline in later life has yet to be seen. The fact-finding approach seemed to impress itself in various ways on members of the group. We have noticed George writing from Aden to suggest that a survey could be made there. Edgar, when on active service in the Far East, wrote long and interesting letters describing local customs such as Chinese weddings. Owen went off to survey German youth movements. Giles collected facts about Anglo-American relations in Korea. We have insufficient material and all our group are too young to tell us much as to the staying power of our training.

On many occasions Will and other members collected data by street interview and handed in their reports. These reports were presented to a meeting of the group and thoroughly discussed. Often the group would discuss methods of approach to strangers, and the sort of questions they should ask before going out to do some 'field work', and then further they would discuss the results of such work after it was done. Will feared that an ordinary questionnaire might not get what he considered a really accurate reply. If contacts were asked what they did each evening, they might reply with some 'high spot' of the evening which had occupied less time than other occupations. If a lad had attended evening classes for two hours and then seen his girl friend home he was liable to remember the latter and reply, 'Took my girl friend out' and forget all about the vocational evening class. Will took trouble to see that he got the whole truth. Here are a few of his notes:

Contact A, collected in Kennington Lane 6.30 p.m. Male, age 19, job draughtsman. 6.2.50.

Evening occupation for each night of week.

Monday Usually goes to ballroom dancing class at his old school club. If not, attends committee meeting of this club.

Tuesday Night school till 9.30. Club meeting till 10.30. Then takes girl friend home.

Wednesday Night school till 9.30. Then Scouts band practice.

Thursday Night school till 9.30. Homework till 10.30.

Friday Night school till 8.30. Young Conservatives meeting till 9.30. Dance till 11 p.m. Then sees his girl home.

Saturday afternoon Football or personal shopping.

Saturday evening Dancing or goes to cinema if a good film on.

Sunday morning General tidying up. Cycle ride. Band practice.

Sunday afternoon Have girl friend to tea or go to her place.

Sunday evening Stay with her for evening.

Asked if he were able to go to a club more frequently what would he do there, he replied:

'I belong to my old school club, which has so many clubs within it that I have hardly time for my present activities.'

Asked Do you believe in mixed clubs?

Replied Yes, it helps both sexes to see two sides of a question and anyone with an inferiority complex to overcome it.

Asked Have you a serious hobby that would keep you at home on a fine evening in preference to going anywhere?

Replied Yes, drawing, sketching, painting, or women.

Any other comment In summer season I usually camp at week-ends with Scouts.

A young quantity surveyor 'collected' at Waterloo that same evening said in reply to the question about mixed clubs: 'They are O.K. so long as you don't jilt some girl and have to keep facing her every time you go to the club.' This young man said he had no serious hobby, but that did not mean he liked staying in and doing nothing as 'I hate sitting round the fire'.

A female aged 17, who described herself as an 'issuer', expressed a preference for mixed clubs and said she had no serious hobby, adding: 'If I have nothing to do at home I go to my club and do it there.' Will adds, 'Work that one out;' This girl was out practically every evening of the week, but she said she liked to go away for the week-end to 'break the monotony'.

One of Kit's contacts gave the following list of evening and week-end occupations:

Monday Stayed in.

Tuesday Played football in street.

Wednesday Sat by bomb site all night and talked with girls.
Thursday Pictures.
Friday Pictures.
Saturday Went dancing.
Sunday morning Slept in.
Sunday afternoon and evening Cycled to Runnymede and back.

'All night' in Wednesday's report meant till 11 p.m. when he was due indoors. The pictures on two successive nights had something to do with the talking to girls, as he took a girl with him on one of the two nights.

In the next chapter some of the actual discussions of the Brains Trust group will be given, so that the young can be heard discussing themselves and their contemporaries in their own words. In offering the following dialogues, and in quoting the written reports made by individuals, we would remind the reader that all the work done by this group was done freely and in their leisure time. No law compelled them to attend the Grosvenor. As we made its activities more educational they were free to leave, but instead they co-operated with zest and goodwill. It is impossible to give in words an adequate picture of the painstaking care that went into their research homework; the real .oving care that went into each pencilled note of interviews and conversations expressed in terse English, not always correctly spelled; the odd newspaper cutting that was handed in, for the bearing it was thought to have on our deliberations; the unsolicited reports: all these would form the documentary of a much maligned generation that is too often accused of seeking pleasure only. Yet none of these youngsters had any obligation to do the tedious and unpleasant tasks we often set them to carry out in the cause of the search for truth. There were among them many differences of opinion. The meetings were punctuated with laughter, but never was the underlying purpose of any group more serious.

Chapter Five

THEY SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

> 'Questions are never indiscreet; answers sometimes are.'
>
> *A Woman of No Importance*, OSCAR WILDE

As we were trying to educate young adults we thought that to find a way to arouse interest was a prime need. We discussed on many occasions, and from many angles, the question of the survival, if any, of interests formed through lessons at school. We tried to discover how far the hobbies of a lifetime can be correlated with education. The following extracts from some of our discussions of the subject may suggest better than a summary some of its many implications.

Interest in lessons at school

THE BARON: I have a job to do and I need your help. I have to interview some schoolboys and I wish to find out what they like best at school, and what they do with their spare time; it will be useful to see if what they do in their spare time bears any relation to what interests them at school. How would you advise me to tackle this job? Will a stranger of my age get the truth from them do you think?

BUSTER: They might be more likely to tell people near their own age, like us, the truth, as we would be more likely to catch them napping.

KIT: Will the headmaster or the class teacher be there? A boy might not tell you what he really thought or did in front of a headmaster, because in the headmaster's view he is more or less doing wrong all the time. In front of a headmaster they would be cagey, but perhaps you'll be seeing them alone?

TILLY: You ought to interview each one separately.

EDGAR: It would be better to fetch them in in pairs. They

would be scared to go in and see a stranger alone. It isn't as if they know you like we do.

BUSTER: Edgar's right. In a short visit you won't have time to get to know them and gain their confidence and then ask them questions. How long will you be there?

THE BARON: About two hours.

EDGAR: Not long enough. I doubt if a whole day would give you time to gain their complete confidence.

OSWALD: I'm like Tilly in thinking that you can get frankness if you see each one separately.

SLIM: How many have you got to see?

THE BARON: About twenty.

SLIM: Bring them in five at a time. A crowd is bad and to meet a stranger is bad if you are alone. It dries you up.

EDGAR: You should start by asking how many have been out at night. Then casually ask what they have been doing. You can then tell which of the group have been doing the same things on the same nights. Then ask if any of the group have a special friend present. If several have, you can then see how far friends influence activities as well as interests.

SLIM: You must take care that in a room full of people, some do not copy others in their reply instead of thinking out what they really do or like themselves. Seeing them alone would be the only way to stop this sort of laziness.

EDGAR: You really need to ask them now what they like at school and how they spend their leisure, and keep this record, and then ask exactly the same people the same questions in a year's time. Then you can check on whether their present interests are lasting or if they have changed. Check whether they have changed friends as well as interests.

THE BARON: That is a very useful suggestion. Has anyone any other advice for me before I tackle this group next week?

BUSTER: You have to be careful they do not all gossip and compare notes if you let them wait in a corridor while you see one or a few at a time. If they get talking together they will all say the same thing when they see you. They prefer to copy each other.

KIT: Don't start flinging your questions at them right away. Have a chat with them to give them confidence first.

EDGAR: That is most important. If you were a stranger calling

on me at work, say, and asking me all sorts of questions, I'd mistrust you.

KIT (aged 15 at this time): Could you perhaps explain to a few senior boys what you were trying to do? That might get their confidence.

EDGAR: Encourage them to be talkable. Then ask them things.

TILLY: Don't say too much yourself or give them a speech to explain. If a stranger and a grown-up talks too much it dries young people up.

THE BARON: So you think that grown-ups get led up the garden by the young? Do you think that you yourselves might more easily get the truth from people of your age than some strange psychologist or a man like me?

TILLY: They are all men, your psychologists. If I were that age I would probably ask the things they do in the way they do. But we know the sort of questions people like us will take, and we can tell if they are kidding us in reply. That pair at ice-skating were going to kid me so I refused to ask them any questions. Would a stranger?

Sidetracking

SLIM (16, still at school at this time): You get used to kidding the masters at school. I use regular economics tactics. I try to get the master to talk. The more he talks the less we have to write. Sometimes my tactics fail. One lesson I made him think I was so interested by asking so many questions that he lent me two dirty great books on the subject to help me write an essay. I had to show I had read them in my essay so I sat up late at night with a wet towel. That was a setback.

EDGAR: Then we come along and ask you what you do with your spare time.

OSWALD (still at school then): The kids at our school lead the masters up the garden path a lot. I think they often get taken in if kids ask them questions.

EDGAR: I used to go regularly to night school. I asked questions to create a good impression in the classes I liked, as well as to stall. I got tired of most things after a while. Then I'd drop off going to night school. Then I'd think I was losing my chances of passing my apprentice exams and my future depended on it,

and I'd get really morbid and start going again. Half the time you want to learn and half the time you are browned off.

THE BARON: So you ask questions and borrow books not to learn more about the subject but to please the teacher or to stop him giving you more work?

SLIM: We have a chap at school who is an M.A. and he is dead keen on currency, especially Chinese currency. He has a lot of stones and coins and photos of Chinese currency. Once he showed them all to us and we were interested. The next week he asked had we seen them and we all said no to see if he would remember. Believe it or not, he got the stuff all out again and that took another lesson. This went on for three lessons. Last week he gave us an ordinary lesson again and at the end of it he said, 'At the end of term I am going to show you those photographs through the epidiascope.'

THE BARON: Then there are teachers who are so keen on their subject that they are blind to your kidding?

EDGAR: Yes. We had a man who had lived in South America. He admired a great deal there. You had only to drag in South America, whatever was being discussed and whether it fitted in or not, and he was happy. He'd go off at a tangent and forget to give out the homework. Our science master is not so easy. He is pleased to answer any question very quickly and then brings you back to the subject.

THE BARON: Do you plan it all beforehand?

SLIM: No, it comes as a routine.

OSWALD: It really all depends if you are interested in a lesson.

THE BARON: Have you ever become interested in an aspect of some subject through this side-tracking?

TILLY: The opposite has often happened to me. I've been interested in a lesson and everyone else has side-tracked and I've been mad because I've wanted to listen.

SLIM: In our school you'd be shouted down if you side-tracked and the others wanted to listen to the lesson. We had a chap who had been everywhere, down a coalmine, up the Andes, in the tropics, on an icebreaker. He taught us geography, and we used to get him to talk about all these things he'd done. It was interesting but we learnt nothing. None of us dared take geography in any outside exam.

THE BARON: Have any of you been encouraged to read a book on some subject raised in a side-track or pursued it further? I am trying to see if these deviations do lead to any incidental new knowledge.

TILLY: Yes. I got a book on astronomy out of the library after we had side-tracked in class and talked about experiments with the stars.

THE BARON: Did you attend the lecture on the stars here at the Grosvenor, and go up on the roof to look through the telescope?

TILLY: No. I wanted to but I had promised to go out with a friend that night. I couldn't let a friend down. I went to several other lectures and some were boring.

THE BARON: Which did you like, and why?

TILLY: I liked the lecture on Corsica. I've got an uncle there and I wanted to hear about the place. I didn't like the lantern lecture on local history though, that was dull. That Australian who talked about psychology was terrible till a minute before the end; then it got better.

THE BARON: Why did it get better?

TILLY: Well he mentioned dreams. We all dream and we are interested to hear what our dreams mean. It seemed to concern us.

SLIM: I liked the local history lecture best of all.

BUSTER: I liked several of those lectures. The one about the law and how it affected us was one of the best.

KIT: We are side-tracking ourselves. We have got to what interests us and not how to find out what interests the twenty senior schoolchildren the Baron has to interview.

THE BARON: It is all part of the same question in one sense, though Kit is right to pull us up. I talked to a few boys in a school the other day and I found they seemed to spend their leisure very much in the way you do. Not many of these boys had paper rounds and other pocket money jobs such as many of our older schoolboys do. One boy helped his parents who had a stall in a market.

EDGAR: Did the boy who helped his parents on the stall do this from choice or was he made to do it?

THE BARON: I didn't ask that. That was an oversight on my part. I found very few of them said they ever played in the streets. One of the boys who did a paper round did.

OSWALD: That is understandable, as by the time he had done an evening paper round and had his tea it would be too late to dress himself and go to a youth club.

THE BARON: I was astonished to find how few of them went out with their parents. Only one person out of forty had been out with his parents for one evening of the week we reviewed.

OSWALD: When you get to be 13 or 14, sensible parents take it for granted that you'd rather go out with your mates, and they don't ask you to go out with them.

BUSTER: It is better being away from them.

EDGAR: I like my parents but you prefer to go out with your mates. My father offered to treat me to a week at Butlin's with the family last summer but I turned it down. I'd rather spend my holiday with my pals and lose the treat.

Survival of interests gained at school

Giles made a private survey of interests that last after school. He asked most of the customers entering his bookshop how far they still pursued interests they had gained at school. Those who buy books may be a selective rather than a random sample of the population, but the following extracts from his notes give some notion of the intricacies of interest-hunting.

Sex	*Age*	*Favourite school subject*	*Present job*	*Further interest in favourite school subject*
(1) Female	24	French	Librarian	Writes to pen friend in France.
(2) Male	17	History and Geography	Student	Boy Scout and has Pathfinder's and Explorer's badge.
(3) Female	19	English	Typist	Still reads a lot.
(4) Female	18	Needlework	Typist	Makes her own clothes.
(5) Female		Biology	Student Nurse	See her job.
(6) Male	36	Natural History	Coalman	No further interest in Natural History.

In our own circle we found some correspondence between interests of school or home and hobby. Simon, whose father was a farrier, had a deep and passionate interest in horses, which overflowed into art. On a visit to the Tate Gallery a modern

still life was written off because details of the harness on the canvas were incorrect.

In some cases defects manifest at school were overcome in after-life. Kate said she was a very bad speller at school and she seldom read a book. She said, 'My spelling was the school joke. But when I got an office job I had to learn to spell, and I learned more by myself in a year than I ever learned at school. Now I read. I have just read and enjoyed *Cranford*.'

KIT: I enjoyed reading at school. We read Shakespeare aloud. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Think of it . . . me . . . Portia.

Will owned that he had been adversely affected by knowing less French than others in his class when he first went to his public school. He began to feel he was bound to be bad at French and to lose confidence over it. Yet when he and the rest of his form started German together he did well in it, showing that it was lack of confidence, not of ability to learn a language, that troubled him. Bertha said she was like that with arithmetic, adding:

BERTHA: The more I worry, the worse I get. At our school we do one term of history and then the next term drop history and do geography, and the last term we drop geography and do French. We are taking a cookery course and we only have time for a little of each subject, but it isn't easy doing it this way.

CATHERINE: If you skip about like that you will never have time to learn enough of any one subject to be interested.

EDGAR: Nonsense. A bit of everything is good; it breaks the monotony.

GILES: Like Bertha and Will I was behind in arithmetic and lost confidence. I used to say I didn't feel well as often as I thought they would believe me, so as to get sent to the clinic in arithmetic lesson.

Education and Enjoyment

We frequently discussed camps with the group, and often asked their advice on our difficulty of getting campers to take any interest in the architectural and scenic features of the district in which we camped. We asked whether they thought educational week-end camps would be a popular alternative to our present camping arrangements. Here is a short extract from

Reuter

A mixed Cookery Class starts

Reuter

Progress in the Girls' Judo Class
— a student throws the instructor

Reuter

Hard work in Sport—indoor football training

Reuter

'Realising the possibilities of painting'

one such discussion, when the Steward had raised the point that those who only looked for the cinema, the dance hall and the fried fish shop in the country were missing so much. Oswald was on the side of the philistines however—

OSWALD: Let them enjoy themselves in their own way so long as they do no harm to anyone else. If they like to do the same things at camp as they do at home, let them. It's their holiday.

WILL: It's not my idea of what's good for them. I like new places and change. I can enjoy a mountaineering holiday although it is another sort of hard work. But there are some people who will never get a broader view. They seem happy as they are.

THE BARON: Does that mean that, in your opinion, there is no way of showing these people, who are the sort that preferred to go to the pictures rather than look at Canterbury Cathedral, what they are missing in life?

SIMON: We always look at the sights when we go away. It is part of the treat for my Dad and me to explore. If small groups went out from camp and you made sure that in each group were some who wanted to see the sights of the place, would that be better, I wonder? Do those who are not interested affect the others?

KIT: You go away for a change of scenery and a rest. If some people have a limited idea of a happy holiday, why try to change them?

GILES: New scenery and new people are a change; whether you get educated or not, these alone have a value. But your educational week-end camps with plenty of freedom thrown in would be enjoyable too.

BERTHA: I like camp as it is, but if there was a good deal of freedom and yet you insisted that we concentrated each morning in order that we could please ourselves for the rest of the day, I think that would be popular. A favour for a favour.

ROBERT: I think people would agree to earn their pleasures. We tried physical training at one camp, or rather it tried itself. A lot of bored people on a wet afternoon found it was fun and then it was sold as a feature of the camp. That's the way to get an activity accepted.

BERTHA: But if you pick a few like-minded campers it helps. People get interested in things because their friends do. At a

camp some of us get keen on some activity. We talk about it at the Grosvenor when we get back. In time others want to try it because they have heard about it and have been told that it was fun.

SIMON: You have to sell things by suggestion.

EDGAR: That's right. People won't do something that they think isn't usually done. It might be a good idea to run a trip to some place with a fun fair and the usual attractions, and then on the way to stop and look over a castle or a church or something unexpected—to throw in your bit of education incidentally.

BUSTER: We would have to be careful of that word 'educational'. I have talked to several people who are put off by it. Girls especially don't fall for the word.

TILLY: A lot of girls would object to compulsory physical training.

ROBERT: What nonsense! When I ran P.T. at camp everyone came to it and thoroughly enjoyed exercise in the open air.

BERTHA: Girls are as ready as boys to be educated, whatever Buster says.

EDGAR: Boys are more stable though. A girl won't start an activity or agitate for an innovation. Boys press for things they want. Girls grumble among themselves but they never say a blind thing at a general meeting, which is the place to grumble.

ROBERT: Girls go for other girls' feelings, not for the thing itself. A boy does a thing because he likes it, but a girl because her friend does it.

GILES: Girls are only individual when their pals are individual with them.

TILLY: A lot of girls have to be made to do something before they know they like it. My mother made me come to the Grosvenor as she thought I was doing too much ice-skating. Very soon I got to like it up here.

THE BARON: I should be interested to find out how far force helps. How many boys present have at some time been made to do something and have got to like it?

BUSTER: I was made to do rugby at school. I got keen on it as there was competition to get into the team.

EDGAR: That is what I mean. There is always rivalry among boys but not among girls. They are complacent. I was made to

go to night-school and I got to like it. But after a time I got browned off with it. All attractions wear off with me.

KIT: I think our rule at the Grosvenor that everyone must go to one class a week is a good one. It gives you a reason for coming other than jaw-jaw-jawing.

ROBERT: I think it is a good rule.

BERTHA: It depends on how you insist on a rule. If the place is not a strict place and people are happy to be there, then they like a rule or two.

THE BARON: I wonder how many members like the rule?

TILLY: If you want to find out, ask people casually. The way to get the truth from people is not to accuse them with each question but to be casual.

BERTHA: My trouble is that I have so many things to do and that I should like to do, and I have not enough evenings in the week to do them all in.

SLIM: I like classes and I have come here mainly for them, but I prefer this place being mixed so that I can meet girls here.

TILLY: Personally I would not go near a 'girls only' club. But even in a mixed club you need something interesting to do other than meeting boys. I like the class rule. If I try to avoid my class and just sit around gossiping, I like to be pulled up. Most people need pulling up sometimes.

The foregoing are but samples of many discussions that we had about education and interest. We discussed with the few why art and dramatics and the subjects that were, in our view, most educational were least popular with the great mass of our members. Giles, who was a keen amateur actor, told us that we should never get dramatics going while it got so ridiculed by a noisy but influential group of boys, who went round on a Tuesday night and tried first to break up the dramatic society and then to upset the art group. We had already heard that some ridiculing went on, but we had not quite realised its effect. We discussed the question with a group of the Brains Trust. Then we decided to discuss it with other groups, each to contain a few well-known ridiculers. In this way we hoped to talk the question out throughout the Institute, and by bringing it into the open to decrease the volume of ridicule. It seemed possible that any

youngster who pursued a purposeful course of activity exposed himself to the bitter ridicule of those who were more apathetic and who would jeer at any who did better than themselves. It seemed possible that ridicule was at the root of our failure to interest large numbers of campers in educational outings. The less alert and acquisitive in mind would in the large party jeer at any sightseeing that was out of the usual run of accepted things to do. Bertha had suggested that small groups of like-minded youngsters would be needed to engage in new activities if we ran educational camps. The mass will not accept the new idea unless it has already heard of it from some enthusiastic source and in a happy connection. Here are some of the conversations we had on a subject of prime importance to all who wish to educate; for there is jeering in some guise in all educational institutions.

Talking of Ridicule

The Baron said he had heard that people at the Grosvenor who wanted to do all sorts of things, such as take part in plays were getting discouraged, as, if they took a prominent part in any of these activities with success, they got mocked and ridiculed by other members of the Institute. Why did these people jeer at others? Was it because they knew that the Steward and he were definitely interested in drama and the arts, and they thought that it was funny and a little pious of the others to like what those in authority liked?

ROBERT: The physical training class is not upset by jeering as such, but very new members get laughed at by those who are expert. At times beginners do look very funny and the others have to laugh at them. A lot can take it but it may put some off, and they give up doing gymnastics before they have got past the clumsy stage. We do lose some new members pretty soon after they have joined the class. This may be the reason.

CATHERINE: It is the same with dancing . . . we would laugh if we saw anyone who was clumsy and awkward trying to learn the steps. You can't help it.

THE STEWARD: Several boys came to me and said they would never be able to learn to dance if they had to get on the floor while all the good dancers were there to jeer at them, or even to see them. They felt self-conscious. That is why we have started a

beginners' dancing group. Some people are highly sensitive to mockery.

SIMON (who had only just started to learn to dance then): I think fear of mockery puts a lot of chaps off learning to dance. Then when they can't dance it disappoints them, and they hang around the walls of the dance hall and make themselves a thundering nuisance, to hide their feelings of inferiority.

GILES: That might be a description of the Conger.

EDGAR: Yes. A lot of chaps are like that. But remember there is laughter *and* laughter. All this can be just fun together. You go on laughing at a person for as long as they will take it. You are inclined to laugh at a freak or a beginner at anything, not only dancing.

THE BARON: Buster, did I hear you were thinking of taking up drama?

Several persons smiled.

THE BARON: I caught several of you then—taking the mickey out of Buster. Why did you smile?

CATHERINE: We weren't laughing at drama as an activity, but Buster isn't exactly the type for drama.

EDGAR: Low comedy perhaps—drama never.

THE BARON: Do you think that most members are scared of being laughed at?

ROBERT: You can't laugh at people who can't take a joke. They get angry and that spoils it all.

EDGAR: You are always out for a joke with people who laugh at the same sort of things as you do. You are careful with those who turn nasty.

THE STEWARD: So you think there are two ways of laughing? One for fun and one for spite? Has anyone ever tried to laugh any of you out of doing something you came to the Grosvenor especially to do?

WILL: No one up here has tried to laugh me out of doing P.T. But at school I used to do extra P.T. out of class hours and they used to jeer at me for that. Up here when I first started to come up into the canteen in P.T. shorts, to get a cup of tea during break, they laughed. I took no notice and they got used to it.

THE STEWARD: Well, very soon you were supported in the canteen by Cuthbert, who seemed to do P.T. in nothing but a large

napkin. So the mob got used to an even stranger dress, more surprising than the Judo champion's dress.

SIMON: Sometimes this sort of laughter is due to nervousness at something new, more than to spite.

THE BARON: Have you had to put up with laughter at your tap dancing, Irene?

IRENE: A lot of people have made fun of tap dancers.

EDGAR: She looks at me. Well, I went down to the middle hall, and there I saw three of the biggest girls in the Grosvenor learning tap dancing in a row, and I said, 'Oh crikey, why these?'

THE BARON: As a description of Irene that is neither true nor tactful.

EDGAR: I was not referring to Irene.

IRENE: It may be that we were wearing shorts and that that seemed funny to them.

ROBERT: Well, our girls' shorts are not the best cut, we must own.

THE STEWARD: Too true.

WILL: They are perhaps rather more practical than attractive.

ROBERT: They are not even practical. They need re-making.

IRENE: If I were looking at girls or boys doing a physical training subject like tap dancing, I should be more likely to laugh if they were not wearing proper clothing, which is shorts. It's not only up here that you get laughed at for wearing appropriate dress. At work I get laughed at a lot for doing all the things I do up here. The older women laugh at the Grosvenor because they know I like the place. It's partly jealousy, partly ignorance. One woman who once came to an open evening up here often pokes fun at me. She's simple really.

THE BARON (hastily): Then she is an exception.

EDGAR: *Is* she?

ROBERT (indignantly): Why do you all laugh at a poor woman for being simple-minded?

THE STEWARD: I laughed at Edgar's innocent little query; when the Baron said a simple woman was an exception, Edgar asked, was she, implying that many women are feeble-minded.

SIMON: If I told them at work that I was in a Brains Trust, it would bring the place down. They tease you all the time at

work. This week I have had a difficult piece of work to do, and the others enjoy my discomfort when it goes wrong and laugh at me unmercifully.

THE BARON: Would they laugh if you took up some unusual hobby like bird-watching, say?

SIMON: They would ask, was I interested in the feathered or the ordinary variety?

THE BARON: And if you said feathered?

SIMON: They would be astonished.

THE BARON: And if you, Edgar, said at work that you were really interested in flowers, would you get a similar response to Simon?

EDGAR: No. Several of my mates are keen horticulturalists. They are interested in flowers themselves so they could hardly laugh at me for being like them. Another is interested in fishes.

BUSTER: It might be useful to think of what gets jeered at up here, and who does the jeering, and also are there any activities that don't get jeered at?

WILL: Cookery is one activity that doesn't get jeered at. It takes place in a centre away from the main building and so no one has to pass through the centre or even by the door to get to any other activity.

GILES: Yes, onlookers lead to jeering and should probably be forbidden. They create havoc at drama and they upset art. If you are making a clay model you don't want a lot of yobs suddenly coming into the room and laughing at it. You are not sure of it yourself and you don't want jeers. There is a certain crowd of boys, including the Conger, who just walk into the room and scoff at everything they find. The instructor doesn't turn them out as he would like them to stay and paint. Onlookers often do end by getting interested and joining a group. It is hard to know what it is best to do.

SIMON: Of course the Conger is quite good at drawing if he could only be got to do it. The trouble with him is that he is witty and clever. He half wants to do things and then draws back and jeers at those who do what he would like to do.

BERTHA: Groups of wandering interrupters are a nuisance. A group of boys (Conger was one) came in and ruined that new singing class. They interrupted what we were singing.

TILLY: Well, I heard she had you singing hymns and part songs. No one would be keen to sing part songs.

BERTHA: We would have preferred popular songs, and the boys just substituted other words for the hymns. That is all. Even those of us who wanted to learn to sing had to laugh.

SIMON: There were too many there. It developed into a lark. I want to learn to sing, but there are a gang who laugh if you like anything but jazz.

WILL: Personally I think people tend to jeer at others through association of ideas. For instance, Giles is interested in drama. This is a thing they associate with the Old Vic, and the notion of Giles coming to a lighthearted place like the Grosvenor and being all the time interested in an intellectual thing like 'drama' surprises them and makes them laugh. Surprises do make people laugh, you know.

THE BARON: You mean the things people would freely choose to do have got to be a choice that the others can understand if they are not to jeer at them?

WILL: Among lesser intelligences you need more understanding than you will ever get to make them see that they, not the people who do the slightly different things, are ridiculous.

THE BARON: They have seen the arts taken as a school subject. They have seen plays produced at their schools, and they have done drawing and painting and singing there. One would have expected them to have come to accept and respect these subjects.

WILL: They had a discipline at school. If you suddenly remove a discipline you get a reaction against it and all it made you do or believe. The fact that they were forced to do a thing at school is enough to make them ridicule it here or in the outside world.

THE BARON: Oswald is very quiet, and he does a lot up here. Do you get ridiculed much, Oswald?

OSWALD: Well, I am known or thought to be good at sport—football. I know a member of the team who laughs whenever I make a mistake on the field. It is the same as ridiculing—he enjoys the mistakes of someone else. Our manager sometimes uses mockery to make them pull themselves up and play better. The other day he told a certain footballer that he was playing like some old woman.

THE BARON: Would it cause laughter up here if you took to essay-writing, say? Would they accept that as well as football?

OSWALD: They would not jeer unless I was known to be a bad writer.

THE STEWARD: As our local paper prints your sports' reports, they can hardly accuse you of being a bad writer.

THE BARON: I seem to have chosen a bad instance. Did those who came to church with me at camp get jeered at after?

OSWALD: I admit that I did a bit of mocking. I think we laughed because certain ones went to please you and not for the service. Getting up at 5.30 in the morning just to please you is a bit funny.

THE BARON: Is that why those here went?

GILES: I always go to church on Easter Sunday.

CATHERINE: I go on Easter and Palm Sundays and on Christmas Day.

SIMON: I wasn't at camp but I went to church this Easter Sunday and I enjoyed the service.

ROBERT: I went because I was invited to go.

THE BARON: You have told me a lot of interesting explanations of ridicule but not how to prevent it.

THE STEWARD: Those who have read the Old Testament will remember that the prophet Elisha used the death penalty on a band of children who mocked at him. He let them be eaten by bears. I hope you can find a simpler and more humane cure.

EDGAR: Why not corner people like the Conger who do the ridiculing up here, and explain to them that it is a bad thing? Reason with them.

WILL: Tell those who fear being laughed at that they have nothing to fear, it is the ridiculers who are unintelligent.

THE BARON: I agree, Will, that yours is the only reasonable attitude to take, but we have to face the fact that there are people who are put off by being jeered at. We want ours to be a free community where there is as little interference as possible with the interests of others. We have to think of some line to take to decrease ridicule.

WILL: To talk to them will not do much good. When your back is turned they may jeer all the more. The only remedy is too difficult to accomplish—to change human nature.

EDGAR: If a person tries to belittle other people, give him some of his own medicine. A snub does wonders.
GILES: You just try snubbing Lionel or the Conger.
EDGAR: I don't know. I've seen Lionel flush at a taunt.
GILES: He may be temporarily embarrassed but he doesn't stay snubbed. He has a quick come-back.
EDGAR: You should try asking a person given to ridicule why they do it.
WILL: That is the ideal. It might work in 30 per cent of cases. But in the rest you might get an even worse turning away from authority.
THE STEWARD: I think it is worth trying Edgar's method of discussing their behaviour with the ridiculers. It is always better to discuss things than to let the irritation grow. We might find out why they jeer at everyone else. Perhaps some of those who jeer most have suffered a lot from ridicule themselves. Perhaps they have felt ashamed of something they couldn't help and now they want to hurt other people because they have been hurt.
EDGAR: I believe that most people up here have intelligence. There must be a way to get at them.

Edgar's delightful optimism encouraged us to try the experiment of inviting a few of those most noted for jeering to group discussions of the subject, at which members of the Brains Trust were also invited to be present. We found that the Conger had a desire to do comedy turns and he was given one to do in our next Christmas pantomime. He wrote his own script and was quite promising in his new role, save that he was very nervous indeed and needed a great deal of help. The Conger said that numbers at our boxing class were small because the training took place in a hall where non-boxers en route for the canteen had to pass. No one would 'shadow-box' when there were spectators. A friend of his had refused to join the class because of this public training-place. The Conger himself said it affected his own standard. This may have been true, as he did better at boxing later in the R.A.F. than he did at the Grosvenor.

Lionel was a promising amateur actor. He also had a group of low-brow and rowdy friends who laughed at dramatics. When he was not in a particular dramatic show, he made a great deal of fun of everyone who was. The only means of subduing him

was to put him in a show. When directly tackled, he said that there was not much ridicule going on in the Grosvenor. He was also a keen boxer, and he confessed that he would not want a girl in whom he was interested to see him beaten in a boxing show, as he thought a girl would prefer to see him win or, if he lost, would transfer her affections to the winner. The girls present disagreed about this. Some of them took the view that they would prefer a boy who lost as they would be sorry for him.

To some of these group discussions on ridicule we invited new members, and we asked them whether they noticed more jeering at the Grosvenor than at youth clubs. We tried by this means to bring ridicule into the open and, by publicity, to decrease some of the hidden tensions in the community. It is difficult to say how far we succeeded. This whole question needs far deeper study and investigation. Until it is understood and faced it may prevent any real co-operation between pupils and teachers in large schools or in crowds. For it seems likely that in crowds all members tend to accept the cultural standards of the lowest present. It seemed that ridicule had something to do with our failure with educational visits to concerts and theatres. After ridicule had been tackled, we found that singing and dramatics and art became successful and popular activities. In time we had a Glee Club that gave shows, and there was such competition to get into these shows that the cast could be made to do twenty minutes' voice production before rehearsals proper began. Part songs were introduced into these voice production lessons and no jeering took place.

Although we built up an atmosphere of tolerance inside the Grosvenor and kept it by ceaseless vigilance and propaganda, nevertheless, like all educationalists, we had to face the fact that in many adult circles in this country, and that not only among the less educated, it is the custom to boast of being low-brow whenever any work of art, in whatever medium, requires a little understanding and real effort to appreciate it. Even the grammar school boy is likely to hear his parents jeer at the Third programme, or at his taste for poetry. He is apt to be affected by the low expectation of literary or dramatic appreciation in his community. If education is to become a living force, a broad toleration and appreciation of the use of the reason and the aesthetic

sensibilities must be fostered in all circles of society. Culture and learning can no more exist in a vacuum than the arts or the moral virtues.

Habits and Distractions

We can only quote from a very few of the discussions on many topics. Whenever there appeared underlying trouble we endeavoured to bring it to light by discussion. We discussed habits and moods and fears and hates, as well as jobs and interests. In one talk about work Simon let in a shaft of light in an aside to Helen.

SIMON: Do you ever dream at work? I sometimes stitch leather when I am miles away.
HELEN: I am often in a deep dream at work and then someone will brush past me and wake me with a start. I sometimes wonder if I have been getting on with my work as I have been so far away, but I find I have done quite complicated jobs like putting a zip fastener on a skirt or a dart in a dress.
THE STEWARD: Are they pleasant, these dreams?
SIMON: Yes, you are quite pleased in your dream.
HELEN: It's more like a longing than a dream.

Dreams are for all of them a necessary avenue of hope and a way of planning the future, as well as a release from the deep despair so common at their age. Dreams absorb some of their awakening and often overwhelming emotions. Dreams are an escape from ordinary humdrum life and present problems. They are also a means of evading the opportunity for thought and contemplation offered by mental solitude. Everyone needs the chance to dream and the inner discipline that can control day-dreaming, and enable the individual to concentrate on thoughts, real plans and work. Without such discipline an individual can spend too much thinking time on idle wishes, spending the money they hope to win, for example, on the pools, or thanking an imaginary lover for some present. The individual can so confuse the real world with the wish-world that all the joy of life, even its stings and set-backs, can be blunted into a treacle of make-believe. Much film-going is turned from being the critical enjoyment of an art into an aid to this wishful dreaming, an

escape from reality. In other ages and cultures such an escape was made into mysticism and poetry, but in ours it is far less transcendental. Next to ridicule and the desire to follow some pursuit accepted and understood in the youngster's circle of home and work, the greatest obstacle to learning is day-dreaming. We have to make art and literature, science and civics, physical education and vocational training more interesting and more exciting than the day-dreams into which a class can always escape. We have to make the grind that is entailed in mastering any skill acceptable.

Again and again this question of dreams came up. Ralph, home on leave before going to the Far East with his regiment, mentioned the way his civilian boss gave his four-year-old son a certain amount of pocket money and expected him to manage. Ralph said that this was a good idea, as those who did not learn early in life to manage money had no idea how to manage later. We had corroboration of this at camp, where 70 per cent of those present were spent out by mid-week. In a longer camp very few had saved enough to see them over the end of the holiday. Ralph added that in cases where no sense of managing money had been developed 'your mind turns to dreams of what you would like to have or what you would like to be. You have never learned what is possible and what isn't'.

The general view was that you could not learn, or rather begin to learn, this difficult lesson by precept. The knowledge had to grow out of an inner realisation of the outer necessity of sheer hard facts. A certain amount of longing about the future is necessary, especially for the more controlled adolescent. It is perhaps significant that Helen was far more restrained in behaviour than many members and yet Helen dreamed more. On the other hand, it was a practical and not unduly imaginative girl whose overwhelming emotional strains led her to play with fire and eventually have an illegitimate child.

A great deal of study is needed as to how far day-dreaming is a safety-valve for emotion. Unless the individual can be helped to put idle wishes out of his mind the consolations of culture, philosophy or educational achievement will be denied him. In other ages, when there was less education, a church-going British public were nurtured by the poetry of the English translation of

the Bible. What have we put in its place? The people need poetry. In many of the expressed reflections of our youngsters there appeared a spontaneous poetry, such as Edgar's definition of swearing, 'A lot of swearing is because people like us can't talk much. It is poverty of language.' As a definition of himself this was grossly inaccurate, as he had a wide vocabulary and was never at a loss for words, but poetry does not need an arithmetical accuracy.

In one discussion of swearing each contributor brought a personal slant to the subject. To Helen the incidence of bad temper was an everyday terror in her home. To Simon the expressions of certain society people were a part of his environment. To Buster swearing was the ritual of his fellow workmen, and to Kit it was an activity discouraged at home and thought manly at work. Here is part of the discussion.

Swearing

EDGAR: It is poverty of language.

SIMON: Well 'our betters' suffer from that too in a different way. They talk about a 'darling' this and a 'darling' that and they call everything from a new hat to a symphony concert 'a good show'. A new baby, a silly joke, or a fine racehorse is 'perfectly sweet'. Another word they use a lot is 'wizard'. This is really no different from the soldier who calls everything a ——, or from calling a chap a bastard. But for some reason a word like 'wizard' is considered polite and 'bastard' isn't. Too much use of the same word is irritating whatever word it is.

EDGAR: I think they overrate the importance of that word bastard; how it is said makes it an insult or not; it is not often meant literally; it is just a word and can be a joke.

THE BARON: In Australia it is often used as a term of endearment, here it is an insult.

HELEN: Swearing is a habit that grows. A girl from the East End came to work in our workroom. She swears all the time, even in front of the boss. It is catching, and we are all beginning to do the same.

THE BARON: Swearing, like many other things, is neither always bad nor always good. It is mainly a matter of good or bad timing. Do people swear through excitement?

BUSTER: Yes, at football matches.
SIMON: Swearing is an outlet. You hurt yourself and you let off steam. I tried swearing at the boss at work the other day. I had asked politely several times to be put on better work and he had put me off with a vague promise. The time never seemed to come, so I swore at him about it. I suppose he thought I was growing up at last as he did listen when I swore, and he put me on better work almost at once.
HELEN: It is never necessary to swear. You only do it if you hear everyone around you do it.
BUSTER: That may be true for girls' trades. If you are a manual worker and you drop a 14-lb hammer on your toe, I defy you not to swear.
EDGAR: When you are really hurt you are often too stunned to swear.
SIMON: An old chap at work had an empty cardboard box dropped on his head. It wasn't heavy and couldn't have hurt him, but you should have heard what he said about it. If he had broken his neck his language would have been a bit much. Yet another day when he was talking to a customer and someone dropped a pold stick on his toe, he never said a word; it was the customer that stopped him although it must have hurt a lot.
THE BARON: That is what I meant when I said there are times when it helps to let off steam. We have to learn to know how to distinguish between the fitting occasion and the unsuitable one.
HELEN: That is an ideal. But quick-tempered people can't always control themselves.
THE BARON: There are times when it is better to swear and be done with it than to let a thing go on rankling. Miss Horncastle, our secretary, was exasperated to-day. She kept on saying, 'Well I'm bothered.' By the number of times she said it one could tell that to say this was not sufficient relief to her feelings. She doesn't agree with swearing. If she could have sworn and got it over, it might have done her good. But it isn't always good or necessary to swear. How many boys swear just to show off?
KIT: Most kids of 14 swear a lot just to swank. They do it in all the wrong places too as they want to be heard. Gangs of our boys from the Grosvenor sit together in the pictures and swear.
THE BARON: I have heard about that. The mother of one of the

girls sat behind them. She took her daughter away from the Grosvenor over their bad language.

BUSTER: They only swear if they go in a mob. A crowd of boys or a crowd of men together always swear and show off more. You try not to swear in front of women but you feel safe to swear with men.

SIMON: For good swearing you go to watch any posh darts match. Their language is dreadful, it is part of the atmosphere.

THE BARON: I was once in a Rugger team and we had a lot of swearing there too. It is an aspect of manly sports. Do you think we get more of it up here than in a church youth club, say?

GILES: I don't think so. You get swearing everywhere, even in the best schools. If those in charge are strict it goes on behind their backs. Here it is worse if the Baron or the Steward are not around, and if they were stricter it would be worse still, as strictness creates a sort of bravado.

BUSTER: I have been in poorly attended little clubs where there is hardly any swearing. It is a crowd activity. So the small group may be the answer, but small clubs are boring. You like to feel you belong to a going concern. If the place is crowded you feel it is successful.

EDGAR: Human beings are like parrots and apt to store up a word they hear and use it later. So swearing spreads.

Parents

The group discussed parents on many occasions. Once, as we have mentioned, a group of parents from a suburb came up and discussed parents and children with them. Parents were constantly coming in and out of our office and we did collect a lot of data about homes, parents and background. The question of irrational nagging was often mentioned as a trial by our members, and the fact that their parents thought they knew best. Cuthbert said, 'Times have changed since your Mum and Dad went out together; in their day it seemed quite right to get in at half-past nine or ten at night. But we like to leave this place at 10 o'clock and then go for a stroll, and possibly have a cup of tea in a café before we go in. They can't see that this is right for us.'

OWEN: It is irritating when your Dad thinks he knows best. I had a day off. I re-arranged my bedroom. My Dad came in and

said, 'You don't want that there.' I said I did and it was my room and I had to live in it. He was hurt at this and said he was only trying to help, whenever he gave me good advice I was insolent. Mum took my part and then he turned on her and they went at it hammer and tongs; that's how rows start, all over nothing.

BERTHA: Once a row starts everybody exaggerates.

They were asked how far they used the Grosvenor as an alibi when they were out with a boy or girl and did not want their parents to know. Many did so use the place, as we were constantly finding out. Many of them suffered from the malicious gossip of neighbours, girls especially. A few suffered with justice. But despite the fact that nearly all of them at some time or other came to tell one or other of the staff that they had decided to leave home, the majority got more understanding at home than would have appeared possible. At their age these young people were reacting against their parents as they tried to assume adult status. They irritated their parents. They criticised them. Many parents were exceedingly critical of their sons and daughters until they were threatened by some outside force such as the law. Then all the emotional disturbances of the home were forgotten. In moments of stress they stood by their children. On the surface in many homes there was irritability, instability and inconsistency. We have heard of this in many homes. But in nearly all of them there was a certain traditional stability shown in this rallying to the aid of a child in trouble and protecting him from outside attack. Again and again this loyalty was forced upon our notice. It was the rock upon which these families rested—this and their intense belief in family life. It mattered not how unhappy a parent had been in one or more marriages, it mattered not whether their background was sternly respectable or demi-mondaine; there was a robust and almost universal hope that a happy marriage would be the lot of their children. They all looked forward to grandchildren. Whatever facts we may reveal as to difficulties in home life of individual members, and however sad we were about some tragic situations, we had constantly to own that there was an epic quality about many of these mothers and fathers, whose own lives were

bounded by the threat of poverty and often by personal tragedy, struggling to buy life for new generations. These parents had in abundance a belief that the world has need of: the belief that life must go on. If any institution can take the place of this sometimes crude and wayward affection, to be met with in the least harmonious homes, we have yet to find it.

Chapter Six

SEX AND MATURITY

'The need for cultural forms in which spontaneous sexual impulses can be happily expressed serves as a testing point in every human society.'

Male and Female, MARGARET MEAD

The major fact in any consideration of adolescent sex is that after puberty young people are biologically adult. In many simple societies this physical maturity would be immediately recognised by the granting of adult rights and responsibilities. It would be assumed that the new-found sexual powers should have some freedom of expression. Our society, on the other hand, withholds the privileges of biological adulthood until economic maturity is reached. We ignore the attainment of puberty, whereas in simple cultures it is recognised and celebrated.

Thus no directive is given to teachers as to the treatment of girls and boys after puberty. They are often still lumped together as children. Arthur complained, when he was 14½ years old, that because he refused to take any interest in football he was made to join a junior class during football period and copy Mickey Mouse off the blackboard. He asked, 'Can they wonder that we play truant when they treat us like a lot of damned kids?'

The same confusion is to be seen in legal practice. For the purposes of inheritance and franchise 21 is the age at which an individual is recognised as adult. Yet the legal 'age of consent' is 16, the age of conscription is 18, and the age when a minor is transferred from the juvenile to the adult court is 17. The confusion apparent in our laws typifies our social attitude to young adults. In simple cultures sex is regulated in accordance with religious taboos and social customs which often form a coherent

pattern giving the young adult a certain security. In our society security and consistency are sadly lacking.

We live in an age of transition marked by a strong reaction against certain arbitrary taboos of a stern religious and moral law. Our attitude to sex is confused by emotion and by the influence of many of the taboos we have thrown away, with a coating of literary conceptions such as the idea of romantic love. Few of us can divest ourselves of prejudice and adopt an objective view. Freud's theories, with their emphasis on the dangerous effects of the undue suppression of sex upon the nervous constitution, were welcomed by a generation that was glad to be permitted to accept an urgent natural impulse without shame.

But even in psychological realms one of the most popular of the new ideas was the idea of sublimation, as it accorded to a large degree with the tenets of the discarded moral laws. Dr. Kinsey mentions this fact as an illustration of the difficulty of attaining an objective approach to sex. He and his fellow-workers found facts which suggested that a human being achieves maximum sexual capacity between puberty and the early twenties. This is just the period during which our society discourages the full expression of sex.

Even our limited observation of the students showed that the individual sexual needs vary within a surprisingly wide range. Our educational discipline and our social regulations may make insufficient allowance for such variation. While parents, social and religious legislators, and educationalists seek to impose a heavy restraint on the sexual activities of the young, commercial interests suffer from no such reticence. While society says to its potential Romeo and Juliet, 'Wait till your apprenticeship is finished and you have a secure job,' those in charge of mass-produced entertainment, advertising and the popular press, keep up a ceaseless sex bombardment. Even shoe polish, apparently, will sell better if backed by sex-appeal, and modern mob-thinking can produce an early awareness of sex even in the audience at a children's cinema show. Books and periodicals emphasise the romantic and erotic in captions and illustrations. In fact a 'mass-observer' from some simple society might note what would appear to him the strange form of torture prevalent in a society which decrees that the young shall postpone all expres-

sion of sex until economic maturity is attained, and at the same time by its advertising provides mass incitement to break the law.

There appear to be three main factors in a young person's attitude to sex; the family relationship within the home; the individual human need; the expectation of contemporaries. In some protected homes, as well as in the society of school or university, sex may break the calm surface less often and less violently—although not always even here. In the overcrowded conditions of many modern homes children are early aware of their parents' sexual life. In some districts and streets in large towns they are early aware of commercial sex. One girl of 15 reported a game played by 12-year-old girls in her street. They used to count the number of men one girl took into a certain house. One can imagine the bad marks she and her friends got as they compared their results in class at school.

Yet despite this early acquaintance with the facts and ramifications of sex, school does provide a relatively sheltered environment, and the change for the school-leaver starting work is severe. Edgar, amongst others, drew attention to disturbing initiation ceremonies which await the entrant into certain employments. The Bishop of Willesden in his report *The Church and Youth* (1947) indicated the havoc caused by the widespread sexual malpractices which stream through industry. Conscription at 18 further broadens the outlook as a recruit enters a world where the gratification of sex is often assumed to be a necessity and everyday language is punctuated with sexual expletives. Thus the expectation of contemporaries in the place of work and, in the case of boys, in the army, can undermine the effects of a serene and secure home background. In fact it is a tribute to the fortitude of large numbers of youths and girls that, despite the temptations of a community riddled with meretricious sex, and the all-absorbing needs of a newly matured adult, so many of them preserve their idealism and their virginity for the person to whom they eventually become engaged.

It is possible that long-term research may furnish evidence that will induce us to question whether it is desirable to retard sexual expression from economic motives. At all events it is clear, as we have stressed throughout this book, that no education can

be given to young persons who are obsessed with sex; or, to modify this statement, that in those who find sexual taboos inhumanly oppressive, the capacity for intellectual work and normal social intercourse is greatly diminished. We have to recognise puberty in some way and discuss its implications and difficulties frankly with the generation of young people whom we are asking to forego sexual expression for some years. In fact intellectual and cultural progress depends on the attainment of self-discipline in the young individual. The ability to know when to stop day-dreaming and think comes from a form of sublimation. It is a function of education to set the pupil free by helping him to acquire some control of his thoughts and emotions. Even in the sexually enfranchised adult control of sex is necessary. If strong taboos have to be observed in conversation and in public life, it is probable that more energy will be expended in trying to observe the taboos than in acquiring true balance and control. There is apparently no limit to the amount of time and energy an individual would and could expend on sex, given no other demands on his time. The real need is to help the young to deal with their own emotional needs and sexual urges while leaving over some energy for the exercise of the reason and the appreciation of the arts. It is only with the consent of the pupil that such education can be given.

In the struggle for emotional maturity the first need is truth. Well grasped factual knowledge will clear the path. Therefore factual sex instruction must have its place, as it already has in the curriculum of many schools. But to know the physiological facts of sex will not by itself assist the individual to subdue intense personal sexual preoccupations. Some general discussion of the subject seems desirable. In our group we found it profitable to lead from discussion of the emotions, in which all adolescents are deeply interested, to the use of the reason. The reason was used to examine the young people's own attitude to sex.

Over the years we frankly admitted to the group that we did not know what should and should not be allowed in the expression of sex. We never suggested that emotions were bad things; we merely tried to reason about them. Books about sex were freely available and courses in sex instruction were planned over three sessions. Most youngsters appeared eager to take the

opportunity to discuss sex. This initial interest led them to cross the barriers between emotional desire and more detached reasoning without protest. For those who were capable of acquiring self-discipline, this was a first step; for those who needed a rational framework and an imperative, here was one that did no violence to their self-respect. They were growing up in a scientific age and therefore they could accept an approach of enquiry into their sexual needs. Stress on the functional needs of sex, and practice in examining their own emotions, gave them a certain confidence in grappling with what was becoming, for them, an intelligible function.

Some of them failed early in making their own sexual adjustments. One girl who had an illegitimate child kept her head in moments of acute distress and dealt with her personal situation in such a way that what could have been a tragedy became, for her, in some ways, an opportunity. She thought that if she got better educational qualifications, she might be able to find a more interesting job as soon as her baby was old enough to be left. Once she discussed her situation with a visitor who advised her to get a job as a housekeeper and to take her baby with her instead of letting it be brought up at her home as one of her own family. She said to the Steward, 'Isn't he rather old-fashioned? That is what used to be the only way out, but surely it is better to bring up the child as part of our family?' In the meantime she continued to do very well in several cultural subjects at the Grosvenor. Her case suggests that sexual urgency and intelligence may be related. It is certainly not true that the more intelligent are the less strongly sexed.

The headmaster of a certain school whose pupils often joined the Grosvenor criticised our Institute, saying that it was not good for boys and girls to mix together or to know about sex. At that time Lionel, the head boy of this school, had become a 'care and protection case', as his mother was suspected of not preventing part of her house from being used for immoral purposes. This boy, who was very fond of his mother, besides being one of our more public-spirited members, could hardly fail to acquire knowledge about sex. At 15 he was interested in what he was pleased to term 'manly sport'. With girls he was self-conscious. Later, as he grew taller and more handsome, he

became more sure of himself. Kit went to the same school for some of his schooldays, so did Arthur, the Conger, Guy and many others. They all in their several ways found sexual adjustment difficult. Kit's mother apparently also thought that sexual information was not necessary for children. At the age of 11 Kit was digging on a bomb site in search of buried treasure, when he struck it in the form of a book designed to explain sex to boys. He put it in his pocket intending to take it home to read, but forgot to take it to bed with him. When he looked for it the next morning his mother had confiscated it and she and his aunt asked him why he had such a book in his possession. After they had soundly rated him and he had failed to convince them that his was a normal need for knowledge, he gave up the unequal struggle. As he said, 'I learned it bit by bit from the other boys at school. It was not the cleanest way. . . . In fact I am not at all sure about certain facts even now' (at 15) 'and have not really grasped the subject.'

This was similar to Giles' experience in the convalescent home. Adults so often think they know what is good and proper for the young to know and think. Those who advocate the policy of ignoring sex should have met Tilly, who said, 'It is stupid to try to stamp out sex. It isn't possible. Not many come to the Grosvenor only to meet the opposite sex, but even if they only came for that it might not be a bad thing. We have got to have meeting-places. We must get to know the other sex.' If people continue to make impossible demands upon the adolescent, they may discredit education and discipline in the minds of the younger generation. We need far more knowledge before we can determine how much repression and sublimation are possible.

Some home situations present peculiar difficulty to the young girl growing up and becoming conscious of her own wish to attract boys and men. A home in which there is a stepfather, official or unofficial, has its problems. There is often at least unconscious jealousy between mother and daughter at the time when the father begins to enjoy taking out a charming young daughter. Often a daughter resents her stepfather's presence in the house and there are arguments about her between mother and stepfather. Suddenly the unruly schoolgirl buys a new dress, uses make-up and tries her new-found charms on her stepfather.

She tries to charm most of the men she meets at this particular stage but it is clear that she may become unconsciously the sexual rival of her mother. One of our girls had been the petted youngest daughter of the family, until her mother re-married and had three little girls in quick succession by her second husband. She then became a problem-child; she quarrelled with her stepfather, took to shoplifting and became one of the very few 'gold-diggers' we found among our girls. In the case of other girls a broken home gave a sense of insecurity hard to overcome. Pearl was very fond of her mother with whom she lived, and less fond of her stepfather. Once a week she visited her real father who used to criticise her mother to her just as her mother criticised him to Pearl. Pearl said that if ever she had children she would stick to her husband even if he was a brute, to save them being badgered about between parents so that they 'don't know where they are'. Tilly had taken the surname of her stepfather when her mother married him and this was a bone of contention between them as at times she regretted having given up the name of her real father. This practice of changing the names of all the family when a mother re-marries must in many ways be convenient but to children who are very fond of their own father and have a family pride it can be upsetting. Guy had changed his name and was always wondering how he could trace his real father. Many step-parents tried to carry out their new responsibilities in all seriousness and with some success. But, confronted with adolescence and all its emotional turmoil, theirs is no easy task, and there are bound to be jealousies, rivalries and tensions. We have stressed the special difficulties of girls who have stepfathers, as girls at this stage are newly aware of everything male and this must affect their relationships even in the home. In the case of boys the tension is caused often by apparently trivial things such as a stepfather insisting that they shall be in by a certain time which may be a few minutes earlier than all their other friends. But these small causes of dissension are but symptoms of a deep and often unconscious rivalry for the affection of the mother. A young man wanting a latch-key can be seen as a rival more clearly than a grubby little schoolboy.

The very natural desire for experience of men and love may lead girls especially into unforeseen difficulties outside the home.

One 15-year-old girl whom we knew well was very upset by the ending of a love affair which she had taken very seriously. One afternoon, she went to the pictures by herself and was befriended by two men, one 35 years old and the other 23. They asked her to go for a walk when the film was over, gave her a drink in a milk-bar and suggested they took a bus ride. The younger one said he had to go home to make a telephone call and asked her in. She said she would prefer to wait outside. They said surely she could trust them, and she said that as there were two she thought she could. She was not safe however, as the younger one raped her and the other one threatened to do so also. The case was taken to court and the men were let off with a caution; it was their word against hers. She was a girl with an unusual regard for truth and she said, 'I told them the truth. Those men told a lot of lies. But they won the case.'

This particular girl did live down the gossip in the neighbourhood and when she was 17 she settled down to 'go steady' with an ex-service boy, a skilled tradesman, whom she eventually married. She had strength of character and she discussed her difficulties freely and frankly with us until they were resolved. Her disillusionment at being disbelieved by the court did not kill her regard for truth; some five years later when she had forgotten to keep an appointment that the Steward had made for her, and the latter suggested that she write a letter of apology making some tactful but fictitious excuse, she said firmly, 'Say what you like. I was never any good at making up excuses. I just forgot this appointment and that is a bad thing to have done.'

Many boys suffered from a feeling of inadequacy possibly due to their early lack of success with girls or with one particular girl. Percy was a case in point. When his short love affair with Norah (mentioned in Chapter Three) ended, he said sadly, 'I want a girl for company. I don't want to settle down yet. When everyone else takes a girl to the pictures on Sunday you feel a fool going on your own.' The Baron often noticed him going out with his mother whom he took to some entertainment once a week. He always looked very happy on these occasions, and had it not been for the look of the thing and the opinion of his contemporaries who expected him to take a girl friend, he would have been fairly content with his lot.

Slim, at 17, was constantly harping on the fact that he liked to see a girl home or dance with her, but that he did not intend to settle down to one particular girl for some years to come. The Steward told him that he should not boast that he was not ready for a girl friend as these were 'famous last words'. Sure enough in a very short time he had begun to take an interest in the daughter of one of his physical training coaches. This boy-and-girl affair lasted until he joined the R.A.F. at 18, and even then showed no sign of abating. It was an excellent illustration of the way in which even the most purposeful and intelligent of these youngsters would break the rules they made for themselves, not to mention any that we might try to make for them.

Robert, whom we have mentioned as sharing Slim's enthusiasm for gymnastics, was less lucky in love. He had had an early love affair which had ended in the girl marrying someone else leaving Robert temporarily disillusioned at 17. For the next two years he stuck to his two boy mates and said he had finished with women. Then at a summer camp in Kent he started to take an interest in Clare and this ripened into a love affair that Robert hoped would end in marriage. At first Clare confided to the Steward that she was so afraid that Robert would suddenly see some other girl he liked better, as he had not had many girl friends and she for her part hoped to keep him. But she was not really ready to settle down early; her unrest seemed to mar all they did, and there were constant scenes between them. Finally she broke it off. Robert took this very badly. He had been saving money to get married. He spent the money; there was no future to save for. He told the Steward, 'You often say it's the foreman at work takes away my confidence. But it isn't. Women take all my confidence away. What is it that I haven't got that makes two girls prefer someone else?' It was useless to remind him that we had all felt just like that in our time and had eventually got over our sorrow and found someone else. He did not really want such comfort and said in real anguish, 'But I can't bear to think that I shall ever really feel any different about Clare. Common sense is on your side, but we have been so very near each other. We went just that little further than we had ever been with anyone else. At least I hoped this was so, but now I keep wondering whether she may have let someone else go just that little

further too. Supposing it was not all new but somehow secondhand.'

It was a few evenings after this conversation that Robert reported a discussion he had had with a group of friends on the subject of love and of losing the partner you have set your heart on. There were four or five taking part in the discussion, some of them happily engaged and some disappointed. They decided that there were two sorts of lovers. The 'idealist' who loved regardless of whether his or her love were requited; and the 'realist' who never fully lost himself in love and always seemed in command of any situation, often deserting the 'idealist' for someone else. They went through a long list of couples known to them and divided them according to these categories. The tragic case seemed to them to be that of the 'idealist' who loved a 'realist', for the former was liable to get badly hurt. And badly hurt many of them did get, as we saw, even though in the case of Robert, as with many others, the wounds eventually healed and he found a pretty and intelligent girl to take the place of his early love.

We tend to think of adolescence as a happy carefree time and to write off these early love affairs as unhealthy or not to be taken seriously. Impatiently we think we know that the next stage will provide some solution such as Robert found. But it is through experience that the young become emotionally more mature and they may depend upon first love and all its poignancy if they are to grow up. Love can take a boy or girl out of his own self-absorption by transferring intense interest to another person. It can be a bridge out of selfishness into an awareness of first another human being and then of the whole world outside the self. A strong character is often deepened and matured by the suffering of an early love affair. These moments of distress come to those with secure homes and sterling characters, who are drawn to hetero-sexual entanglements. Still more, sometimes, do they come to those of homosexual tendencies. One spring, when a dramatic performance was in preparation, an ex-public schoolboy, who had been given a leading part, let us down a few days before the show as he had become completely absorbed in a homosexual affair. Whether it be with the purposeful, the intelligent, the slightly dull or the somewhat maladjusted, sex has a shattering effect.

An instance of an ordinary schoolgirl love affair at one of our camps illustrates in some degree the intensity of feeling that is typical of adolescence. Three local schoolgirls became so attached to two of our boys that when we left by coach these three girls were in tears. We saw some of the letters sent by one of them. In one letter she wrote: 'I wished you could have stayed another week, because you went away just as we were getting to know you properly. I am sorry I didn't say goodbye but I was too upset. Sybil and I have been talking about you and your gang all day. There is nothing to do here now that you have gone to London, but there I suppose there are plenty of things to do. I wish you had won the football match against our boys here as they keep tormenting me because I cheered your team. I still have the daisies that you gave me . . . I hope you believe I am 15 because I am. I believe you are 16 because you wouldn't tell a lie. . . . If I play about with other boys like you do with the girls at the Grosvenor it will only be because you are not here for me. . . .'

This letter expresses the pathos of the first realisation that those we love tend to disappear, just as we have learned what they mean to us. We can imagine that for a few weeks its writer was inattentive at school and, unless her teachers understood what had happened to her, they and she would be at cross purposes. Yet an understanding teacher might have been able to lead her at this time out of personal anguish into that generalisation of emotion that can be found in the arts. A highly emotional boy who was partly Hindu often used to sit and play the piano. He owned that if he was in a 'bad mood' he could work through it by 'playing on that old piano'. He later made a happy marriage and we did not see him for a year. When his first son was born he came and played for over an hour on that same 'old piano'.

It is often suggested that art or sport or social service form healthy alternative outlets to sexual interests. Yet many who have to do with both formal and informal education of adolescents confess that this encouragement of sublimation through the arts is not easy. The young have to be accepted as they are and it might be easier to lead them to the arts, not as substitutes for love and the intense affections, but by means of these things.

There is no easy panacea such as offering all strongly sexed youngsters a paint brush or segregating them in a football team. But if the individual can be led to art as a consolation when in acute distress, art and its practice and appreciation becomes not a teacher's fad but a felt need.

It is important to attempt to achieve some balance of interests and not to encourage over-development of the emotions or of the aesthetic and cultural interests. Even for the girl not at present involved in a love affair there is the deep, albeit partly unconscious, urge to find a mate and thus to justify herself with her contemporaries and to fulfil her destiny. No wonder she is often moody. One 14-year-old girl commented on the raised school-leaving age, 'That extra year takes too much off your life. You have to marry when you are 19 at latest or you are on the shelf. You don't have much life once you are married and have children. You can't afford nice clothes till you have left school and can earn money to save up for them. Now you can't start work till you are 15 and it takes a year to get some clothes together. . . . That only leaves you three years to live.' She was a year out in her calculations. She married at 17 and lost her first baby at 18. A contrasting case was that of a boy who found emotional adjustments difficult and his consequent moodiness destroyed much of his cultural capacity. It was not till long after we had battled with his problem that we learned from his mother that there had been an attempted assault on his sister by their father which he had witnessed when a young boy.

We had friendly discussions with more than one psychologist as to how far calf-love should go. All frankly admitted that the adolescent is a deprived adult. While it is essential that all human beings should exercise sexual control, the degree of control cannot be rigidly and generally defined. We learned that freedom alone is no answer. The more the young were left to gratify sexual impulses the more their appetite seemed to grow. We found this at early camps and quickly realised that it was necessary to have many alternative activities so that those with apparently one-track desires could be invited to vary their programme and engage in sports, educational visits and routine duties. Although other occupations than chasing the opposite sex were constantly advocated, at no time did we suggest that

all love-making should be taboo, When we tried opening a reading room at the Grosvenor, Norah started a fashion for playing kissing games there. We found that younger boys and girls foregathered for this purpose. At first we hoped the craze would wear itself out, but the more kissing games they played the more they seemed to want to do this and nothing else. Strong hints were thrown out that no one could live on an undiluted diet of kissing games; there were other things in life. Finally we closed the library and brought the books and cases into the office.

We discussed these developments with the other students and asked how they would deal with them. This was at least an attempt to treat them as adult by admitting our ignorance and asking their advice. We discussed with them a course in sex instruction that was being planned. A young doctor friend was to give several lectures, some to mixed and others to segregated audiences. He combined real factual knowledge with a certain diffidence of manner which decreased their shyness and led them to ask about their own problems as well as to drink in all he told them. He kept notes of his 'audience reactions' over three sessions.

The first time this course was held there was considerable self-consciousness about attending the lectures. Boys who were hanging about in the corridor were asked if they were going to the lecture. They invariably replied that they were 'not interested', and then spent the rest of the evening wandering round the building, invariably stopping outside the door of the lecture-room and peering through the glass top. Girls who did little at the Grosvenor but incite boys to chase them and then ask for protection, committed a pretty perjury when invited to one of the lectures, saying sex did not appeal to them.

The individual problems raised in each course were similar. In the main the chief problem for boys up to 17 years appeared to be masturbation. Those over 18 were mainly concerned with how far they should go in love-making, with questions about birth control, and how they could tell when and where a girl wanted them to stop.

For girls the chief concern was how far to let a boy go. The girls were well aware that, although boys would try to go as far as they were allowed in their love-making and would probably

leave a girl who kept them at arm's length unless they were very fond of her, these same boys, when they came to marry, would only marry a virgin. This dual standard of expectation is unsettling for most generations of girls. The Scots lassie who blushingly asked the doctor if it was all right to let boys 'mess about up top' was speaking for many present at a 'girls only' session. In reply to a similar question another year, the doctor said that it was they who had to decide what they would or would not permit in love-making, remembering, if they were wise, that there was no need to be in too great a hurry. Sex might seem terribly urgent to them now, but as they grew older it would take its place with many other activities in a full and happy life. This advice was greeted with a chorus of exclamations: 'But you lose your boy-friend if you are particular how far you let him go. What are we to do?' This chorus came from a group of girls who had refused to go to the lectures the first session they were held. Many of them had been observed to make frequent changes in boy-friends. At first they had not seemed disposed to speak at all when asked for questions, but after this outburst they asked many more questions. It was really an achievement to get them to the meeting at all.

Books were a less satisfactory source of knowledge than lectures, largely because the books designed for the enlightenment of adolescents were so inadequate. Giles expressed a fairly general dissatisfaction when he said, 'Some of these writers tell you everything. They go from apple blossom to earwigs but they leave us out.'

And all the while they were finding less desirable sources of information. At one time there was a fashion for showing each other crude photographs of nudes that had been given to a member of the Forces by an American soldier. The Steward when asked her opinion of these pictures said they were bad photography. She bought some English monthlies that featured good photographs of nudes. A large volume of plates of Rubens was borrowed, and groups of boys and girls sat round the fire examining these plates for many an evening. Postcards of nude sculpture and paintings of nudes were left about. Many boys tend to make clay models of nudes at a certain age. After an Easter camp, during which he had had a love affair with a

village girl, Basil made a clay model of a reclining nude that had great beauty. This was his one work of art, for soon after making it he joined the Navy.

Alastair, who reached puberty very late, and who took a more long-term interest in modelling and painting, was, on the other hand, an incredible prude. He protested if anyone made a nude model. He seldom discussed sex and never read love stories, but on one occasion when a photograph of a child in the womb was used as cover illustration on a weekly paper he evinced great interest, and interrupted a conversation between the Steward and a visitor to enquire, 'What's uterus (pronounced "utterus")?' With him, like the others, the interest in sex is strong even if unconscious. It must be if they are young and alive.

The fact that we admired nude human forms, though with a certain critical selectiveness, appealed to them. But Rubens was not always accepted as an improvement on the 'it-girl' as we saw when a boy who had been copying a slick magazine nude was handed a Rubens reproduction as the sort of nude figure the Steward admired. The boy said he preferred the 'modern version', adding, 'These women in your picture are so old-fashioned.' Eventually he was placated with some Etty and Gaugin figures, which he consented to draw.

Lack of understanding by an adult at a time of sexual need can have astonishingly lasting results. Alf very rightly considered that a mixed camp was a danger and that petting in huts must be discouraged. At an early camp he drove away pairs who were sitting on the grass engaged in mild love-making. Three years later Owen and Buster referred to this episode and declared that Alf, although lovable in many ways, was totally misguided in his attitude to sex. They disliked methods of supervision that savoured too obviously of the Watch Committee, or of the treatment that would be accorded to 'children'. Gail bitterly resented the fact that Alf did not trust her alone in a tent with Roddy after they were engaged. She was typical of many others in this. Fear in those responsible for their welfare is a cause of much harm to youth.

If we encourage the young to use their reason in examining their own deepest emotional problems we have to risk the prob-

ability that our own hypocrisies will be unveiled. Discussion of sex not only released some adolescent anxieties; at times it encouraged in them a relentless logic. Ursula once asked why it was that all the popular women's magazines in their advice columns invariably advised young women against sexual experiment if they were unmarried, or against breaking their marriage, however unsuccessful that marriage was. She said that many serious-minded ordinary people who were not really promiscuous, broke these rules. It seemed strange that popular papers should advise adherence to a stricter code than that kept by her own friends. The Baron explained that periodicals had to uphold the moral standards of society, even if some of them were ignored in current practice. Ursula was not at all satisfied with this advice and said, 'It is bad to have a set of rules that ordinary people do not keep. Why not make rules that are easier to keep? If you have rules that go against human nature people get ashamed of their own human feelings and actions. This makes us half-ashamed of our personal sexual life; this cannot be good. It makes us look down on what other people do too. We ought to respect the sex in ourselves and in others.'

Ursula had pointed to a difficulty that has to be faced by all adult advisors. Several of our members were illegitimate; others, like Pearl, were the children of broken homes, or, like Lionel, of demi-mondaine homes. Nearly all these young people were very fond of their parents whatever codes they might have broken. To criticise too severely any sexual deviations in behaviour would have been to pour scorn on highly respected parents and make more conflicts than we solved. Precept can be very dangerous if generally applied. As time went on, we found another strange fact (unless it was a series of coincidences): those who deviated often came from respectable homes, while those who came from demi-mondaine or the least prepossessing homes often led more regular and purposeful lives and made successful and respectable marriages. A wide and generous toleration such as that advocated by Ursula (at this time a 17-year-old post office clerk), seems the wiser way.

From discussions scattered over some four years the following notes have been selected. The beginner in love affairs appears to have a general need for variety. Gilbert said, 'You

are only young once and you can't afford to get tied up with one girl too soon. You need to do other things. A girl takes up a lot of time and she takes you away from your mates. Suddenly after going with a girl you want to be free again; but after six weeks' freedom you often think you would like to take a girl home later on to-night. You need girls and you need to be free.'

KATE: Yes . . . you need boys and yet you like a change. If you spend all your time with one boy you are fed up after a while.

(Some months after this discussion both Gilbert and Kate settled down to one sweetheart for a prolonged period.)

URSULA: I admit that I like a change at the week-end if I have seen a lot of one boy all the week. I like to go to a dance with a girl friend and to meet new boys there.'

BUSTER: You have got to meet all types of people. You need change.

URSULA: You must have noticed that when a new girl joins the Grosvenor all the boys are interested for a time. She is a change—someone new. She has a lovely time at first. After six weeks they drop her. One of our members has joined a local youth club. She wasn't noticed up here at all, but there she is having the time of her life. She is a novelty to these other boys.

Desire for change and variety, partly as a way of learning more about the opposite sex, is a factor equalled only by a second irreducible and stubborn characteristic. Young people who are temporarily infatuated by a member of the opposite sex nearly always have a certain imperviousness, varying in degree, to the calls of any other activity. There was a stage in the love affair of Catherine and Don when Catherine used to go down to the gymnasium to watch Don do gymnastics. George Blake would have rather she had found something else to do, but he decided that it was not reasonable to prohibit this devoted interest in all Don did. Had he taken a different attitude Catherine might have won, and a brilliant gymnast would have been lost. Gradually Catherine got interested in the Brains Trust and in a dancing class. These affairs either burn themselves out or settle down gradually into a more even tempo. We often asked what should be done with a couple who seemed entirely absorbed in sex. Tillv who kept her head in many love affairs,

replied, 'Better let well alone. Love affairs don't always decrease other interests; sometimes they increase them. A boy may interest a girl in some new thing. Whatever you do you will always get boys and girls going together. If you run segregated institutes they will meet after the boys' section is closed, or the boy will stay away from his class and take the girl out.'

How right Tilly was! The Baron after this had occasion to visit a famous boys' club. He was astonished to see a lounge full of girls who had the wireless on. They were permitted to sit in this room and listen to a quite dull radio programme for the whole evening until the boys were free for dancing. The sight of them sitting there, bored with the radio but with one end in view, was really rather sad. This did not seem a solution.

The Baron asked the Brains Trust how long they thought they would enjoy opportunities for unlimited love-making, with no curbs on their action or other calls on time and interest. Buster said he would soon want a change, but Simon said, 'You might want a change after about forty years' love-making. It would take that long to get tired.' Simon was at that time beginning to be attached to one particular girl, a friendship that lasted and led to marriage.

There was a general desire for liveliness and colour in their boy or girl friends. When the girls were accused of being gold-diggers who always chose costly entertainment, Ursula said, 'If a boy is a good talker, it is better. Then you can enjoy a walk in the park. But if he has nothing to say and there is no discussion and long silences, then you need the pictures.' Several stressed the need for affectionate relationships, but some of the younger ones thought all you needed was happy companionship. Tilly said, 'You can go out with a boy who has a lot of money and be bored stiff. Money is not everything.' Edgar said, 'I like a girl with a sense of humour. I don't stipulate good looks but I like her easy on the eye. I'm not looking for a girl yet. Usually a girl takes a boy too seriously too soon.'

When asked by the Baron whether they expected some return if they had spent money on a girl, such as being allowed to kiss her goodnight, Buster said, 'If the whole evening has gone well and the girl has been good company and looked and behaved well, you don't mind if she doesn't want to be kissed.' The

following extract from one long discussion emphasises the endless search to find a norm in behaviour while at the same time fulfilling a personal need. Both boys and girls had no idea of the pace that was desired by their partners.

KIT: You never know how fast or how slow to go. I think a boy tries to weigh a girl up in his mind before he asks her out. If he does try anything on, it is because he thinks she won't mind.
WILL: I've been under the impression that most girls expect to be kissed goodnight if you see them home. But there have been times when I have seen a girl home and not known whether she expected to be kissed or not. I don't want to seem backward in coming forward. We are all of us afraid of seeming too fast or too slow. That is our trouble.
GILES: How far to go is a problem. The first girl friend I had up here was a case in point. For the first fortnight I didn't even kiss her. Then we went into the reading room and we played kissing games.
THE BARON: Why do you like love-making in a crowd?
GILES: It wasn't the crowd you wanted, but if you had not much experience and were not sure how far girls liked you to go, it gave you confidence to see how others managed.
URSULA: Sometimes a boy gives you a good time for an evening and doesn't even kiss you. Sometimes they ask if they may kiss you. Personally I'd prefer them just to act. If you have had a good evening, of course they may kiss you.
OWEN (at this time just out of the army): For the last four months I've been friendly with a girl and I see her every week but I've not kissed her once. We are both interested in photography and films but I don't feel that way about her. It's just a friendship.
URSULA: Have you ever asked yourself what *she* feels about it?
ROBERT: I expect you are too callous to care if the poor girl goes home and bangs her head against the bedpost when she has said goodnight to you, and wonders what can be wrong with her if you've never even kissed her after four months.
OWEN: I had my fling in Germany. I don't intend to settle down till I'm 25 or so. I'm out for friendship and no ties at present.
BUSTER: It is all very well for girls to advise early marriage but

it is an expensive business. I shouldn't be able to afford it till I'm 24 or so, either.

TESS: We don't know if a boy wants us to go serious or not. I want someone to tell me what a boy wants. Neither side knows what the other wants and it all gets to frustration. You disagree because you don't understand. There is an awful lot of misunderstanding in sex. A girl wants to know what goes on in a boy's mind.

GILBERT: And if you knew it might spoil it. You need surprise.

TESS: Even so, you want to know how he wants you to be when he is in a mood. If he is quiet, must you stay quiet or be gay?

THE BARON: Do you think you could be helped by some broader course of sex instruction than we already have at the Grosvenor?

TESS: The subject can be split up into many different divisions. You need to teach us the scientific side. Then there is the emotional side. That is very important.

OWEN: In the army we had sex instruction. They kept on and on repeating warnings about the dangers of V.D. All so very one-sided.

URSULA: The emotional side is far more important.

TESS: You need to be careful who does this sort of teaching. The ordinary grown-up is often too tangled up in their own emotions to be able to give emotional teaching to others. They are too involved to see our point of view.

GILBERT: To have someone teach you how to manage your emotions might make us all uniform. They already give you advice on how to manage the physical side of love and that tends to give us all the same approach. If we had a similar drill for the emotions there would be no variety.

TILLY: Yet we must learn something about the emotions. Books are not much use. Novels can help—I read *Sons and Lovers*. But the books written to explain about sex go on and on about flowers and insects, and I have put the book down and been browned off long before they get to us.

KIT: We don't want a lot of stuff about butterflies. We all need to know what is a sane attitude towards sex.

TILLY (looking seriously at the Baron): Is all this less worrying when you get past the adolescent stage?

URSULA: A thing that makes me mad is if I hear a crowd of

boys boasting of what they have done to some girl. It often isn't true and it gives the girl an undeserved bad name. What you do with a boy should be kept private.

ROBERT: Everybody boasts . . . even girls talk about their successes with boys to each other at work I am sure. I've heard girls nattering about their boy friends. I bet everybody boasts.

THE BARON: What does this boasting amount to?

SIMON: It damns a boy as it keeps all the girls away, but if it is boys a girl wants it sends them all after her if they hear she is easy.

GILBERT: For a time, yes. But if you feel that a girl is easy and that she lets you go a long way quickly, you can't help wondering how many have been there before you.

Certainly a lot of talk did go on about other people's love affairs and we also had frank confidences from members about their own progress in love. Tom Shelley tried to get a girl friend who was younger than he was, attractive to look at, and a flirt. She was 15 years old and not yet ready for a regular boy friend and when he sent her a note to ask where he stood she ignored it for several days. Tom went about looking more like Hamlet than Al Jolson whom he admired, and during a game of rounders he came and reported to the Baron that 'that girl is happily playing rounders and she hasn't made a sign that she has even read my letter'. They all liked to talk about their worries and their successes. Tom and his friends had an altogether delightful frankness. After a week-end camp in 1952 when they had tried to shock the girls who took a cup of tea to four of the boys who were still in bed, the whole story was happily repeated to the Baron.

There is for the young a kernel of truth to be got even from a sexual joke. They all had the idea that no adult could entirely understand the problems which they had to face. This idea was possibly truer than we should care to admit. A very likeable boy expressed this notion to the Baron when he remarked one evening, 'Well, in Queen Victoria's day when you were young you never heard a dirty joke. That's why I'd hesitate if I was telling a dirty joke and I saw you coming; I'd try to change it to a clean one.' Even the most understanding adult can never quite bridge this gulf, and it is probably undesirable that it should be bridged.

Independence cannot be attained without some struggle. In a world of too helpful adults there might be too little struggle.

We have seen that most of our girls lied about their age when they were under 16. In a discussion on this subject Giles said.

GILES: I think the wish to be thought older is largely confined to girls, and their motive is that they want a boy friend who is older than they are.

BERTHA: A friend of mine is 13 and looks 15. She always says she is nearly 16. She is my mate and goes around with me although she is really two years younger. I go about with boys of 17 and she comes too, but if the boys knew she was only 13 they would not take her out. She will be relieved when she is old enough not to have to lie about her age. She says 16 is a decent sort of age. She will stop saying she is older than she really is when she is 16.

KIT: I have had to lie about my age to get into the pictures without an adult.

OSWALD: I often lie for a useful purpose like that.

KIT: There you have the difference. Boys lie for a purpose but girls lie for love.

GILES: Well, a girl's whole environment is against her. She is taught to expect romance, not reality. She reads serial stories that are full of sticky sentiment and that makes it worse. Then she often goes to the pictures and drinks in more unreality.

This lying about age was general in other adolescent circles than ours. It is significant that the legal age of consent was the age that Bertha's friend considered 'decent'. Of the girls who became mothers just at or before their 16th birthday most looked older than they were, and had lied about their age. Norah had not so far as we knew lied about her age, but she took good care never to bring her soldier sweetheart to the Grosvenor in case he should see her in what would appear to be a youthful setting.

At a summer camp in 1951 we had a girl who was interested in classical music and who had had a grammar school education (see Chapter Seven, Case 43). She was 14½, and a boy of 17, who was an unskilled worker and not at all interested in the arts, fell in love with her. They were inseparable and all the efforts made to divert them from each other proved fruitless. We saw very little

of them during the 1951–52 session, although whenever we saw them they were together. We tried to insist that they engaged in class activities whenever they appeared but they then absented themselves for many months. By then the girl's parents had discovered that on a few occasions when the girls' family home was empty, they had gone back there and with the girl's consent (although she was under age) become lovers. This girl was, like Norah, one who suddenly developed a sexual urgency that would not be denied. About the same time as this affair was reaching a climax the other 15-year-old girl (referred to in Chapter Seven, Case 37) was going on the streets. She carried grown-up clothes and make-up around with her, and went out in search of quarry in local public houses. The Baron and the Steward caught her out in this proceeding on several occasions, and sent for her mother who asked that she should be given another chance. She, unlike so many of the others, such as Norah, appeared entirely heartless. How she will develop it is difficult to say unless something happens to her that develops her capacity for feeling. She had a quick intelligence. She was a first-class athlete. But she was not even worried at upsetting her mother. The general feeling in the Grosvenor was against commercial sex although those who had engaged in this trade were accepted if they came back.

We discussed the age at which our members had first become interested in sex; it ranged from 5 to 12 years in so far as their memories were accurate. They had nearly all had boy-and-girl love affairs from the age of 10 or 11. Mr. Baker, our schoolkeeper, named the age of 11 as the date when he had first known what it meant to like girls. As he always named this age over a period of years it appeared likely that he had experienced some outstanding sexual awakening at that age. Tilly owned to a first interest in boys at the age of 14. Buster cited 14 years as his starting-point in sexual interest. Will had had one girl friend from the age of 14 until he was 19. At first it was a mere friendship, but later the girl made advances and it ripened into something stronger. At his public school it was, in his day, the fashion to have a girl friend. Catherine remembered having boy friends from the age of 13.

Two-thirds of the parents of those present had been married

before they were 19 and many mothers had married at 17. These mothers became worried if a 15-year-old daughter wanted a boy-friend. They tended not to want regular boy friends coming home; there were certainly dangers if they did so, as many mothers and fathers were out at work and the homes were unattended. The young people wanted somewhere private to do their love-making, as in the street they said they were liable to get moved on by the police who discouraged loitering in doorways.

In discussion, it was the youngsters themselves who emphasised the need for alternatives to sex (or sublimation). Tess said, 'It all depends on what you put in place of sex. If you put a variety of things that boys and girls can do together they would be happy.'

THE BARON: New things?

BUSTER: Yes . . . the novelty is bound to wear off any activity.

TESS: You need continual variety to put in place of the girls' wish for boys and the boys' wish for girls.

BUSTER: For me variety is necessary but not for everybody. The members of the Judo club seem content to do Judo twice a week.

TILLY: Even so they like to come up to the canteen in the interval and talk to a few girls. You always get that. I know a commercial school where it is against the rules for the sexes to mix. The whole place is a hotbed of secret sex . . . you have to expect it. There comes a time when everyone wants to run around with a boy or girl.

SIMON: All of us like other things than girls. I enjoy all the things I do in the evening—Youth Council work, painting, Brains Trust, and then I enjoy seeing a girl home at the end of the evening; I think I enjoy it all the better for having to put it off.

TILLY: I have got to like things I've been made to do. People like to be forced to make an effort over something, so long as they have time to sit and do nothing as well as time for boy friends.

GILBERT: I like your rule up here that everybody must do something. I would do less if I were not expected to do some definite class. I think some people who resist going to classes could first be got to work on the social side, as that broadens their interests.

You need all the time to do other things than sex so that sex itself is a contrast and a change to everyday life.

THE BARON: I agree that everyone, even older people, need to think and do a wide variety of things other than sex. Sex must take its important place alongside many other interests and skills. But how far do you think day-dreaming about sex, and the boy or girl you hope to meet or to take home, interferes with some of your other interests or with your work?

GILBERT: I dream about the future. I have a habit of planning things for years ahead.

TESS: I can cut my brain in half. I can knit and read. I can read a book and follow the story and yet be thinking about a boy all the time. I can type quite accurately and be thinking about a boy. I walk home in a dream and cross a busy road and I don't get run over though my mind is miles away.

URSULA: I don't dream much at work as there is a lot to attend to but at home, where there is no one to keep me up to scratch, I day-dream a great deal.

BUSTER: I can't dream at work. Sometimes I slacken off for a while, but then I see the foreman look at me and I get on with my work.

The group had got to the point where they could see the need for discipline. They all welcomed someone or something to keep them up to the mark. They did not want to get slack. They had the joy of thinking that they had come to these conclusions in discussion of themselves. This realisation of certain truths about themselves was for them experience, and out of such experience more mature attitudes may develop. They had the joy of being treated as adults, which is a prime need with the adolescent. It seems clear that much work has to be done to discover the means of enabling the individual to learn to understand, and to some extent control, his own emotions. We use psychology far more to deal with the maladjusted young person and too little to help the ordinary mass of young people to understand themselves and so be able to manage their lives more harmoniously. There is room for large-scale controlled experiment in the education of the emotions and, as a part of it, sex education, with documentation of results.

Certain factors appear essential in the approach to sex.

There is the need to treat the young as adult and not to be too dogmatic in one's approach to behaviour problems. All of us have to admit that the law as it now stands has many anomalies in its application to the adolescent. While it is necessary to condition the young to the law as it is, we have to agree that it could be vastly clarified. A great deal of free discussion on all matters connected with sex and the law as it applies to these young people is required, together with some factual lectures given by a medical man or some expert in the subject.

An incident, which occurred one summer evening at the Grosvenor illustrates some of the frustrations that the law, as it stands, inflicts on our young people. Oswald and his friends had been playing summer football in the school playground. Some enthusiast kicked the ball into a neighbour's garden; as the owner of the garden was out, it could not be retrieved. Oswald asked the Steward for a second football. She refused, saying the other one must be brought back or else all must suffer for the carelessness of one who kicked so high. They tried every argument but the Steward did not relent. Footballs were expensive and two in one evening could not be given. They were angry and disappointed and they all left the playground in a mass saying there was now nothing to do at the Grosvenor. Half an hour later the Baron met them in an adjacent borough outside a variety theatre where a 'problem' play was billed for 'adults only'. They angrily asked the Baron to tell the commissionaire, who had questioned their ages and refused to let them into the theatre, that they were all over 16. He could and did, and they all trooped into the theatre trying to look really elderly to allay the insult of being taken to be under 16. These youngsters are so often asked to take adult responsibility and yet at every turn someone is likely to suggest to them that they are really irresponsible children. Our angry and frustrated footballers held at bay at the swing doors of the theatre, were a living cartoon of the whole situation of the urban adolescent—sex on every placard, and a commissionaire at every door.

Chapter Seven

THE PROBLEM ADOLESCENT

'I wish I was an ancient Greek. I'd have had a better life then and by now I'd be dead and all my troubles over.'

Boy aged 17 writing from an approved school.

In a book about adolescence it may seem humorous to devote one relatively short chapter to what is popularly known as the 'problem child', the 'young delinquent', the 'maladjusted', or the 'unclubbable'. The subject is one that has received a great deal of current consideration, as can be readily understood. Those who fail to adapt their behaviour to the laws of our society cause a great deal of inconvenience and a great deal of expense. In fact we hear so much about the problem-child that we are apt to think that he is some special and particular breed of young person who can easily be picked out and treated, if and when we know how to treat him. But in the last chapter we gave examples of many young persons who were often problems to themselves, to their parents and to us, while at other times they were law-abiding and public-spirited members of the community. From 14 to 21 most young persons are problems to themselves and other people for some part of the time. It is a sign of growth and development that they should be. It is part of the necessary re-orientation from a directed and protected childhood to a self-determining adult citizenship of a free society. Of course some make tragic mistakes, and others make mistakes for which they suffer less. Human beings have to learn from their own first-hand experience, and for this reason they are likely to be a problem to society while they are practising and training for adult status. Those who are least trouble are likely to be less effective adults, for it is common for large numbers of people to remain lazily in the adolescent stage of development both socially and emotionally.

Normally when we talk of the 'problem child' we mean the young person who becomes the concern of the child-guidance clinic (if he or she is fortunate enough to live in a district where one is provided) or of the juvenile court and the probation officer. But the term may easily acquire undertones of meaning and may be used to signify no more than the young person who is a thorn in the flesh of those who are running an institution of informal education, a workroom or a youth club.

It is surprisingly easy to write off as maladjusted all who do not fit into the pattern of behaviour most convenient for the adult in charge. They are merely young, untrained, full of energy and enthusiasm, with perhaps a clumsy sense of humour. We must expect a lot of noise and trouble from them and some damage will be done. They have only to sit on a chair for it to break. They will suddenly throw furniture about. They are careless with equipment, despite the lecture we gave them about responsibility for public property. They cannot always adjust themselves to our idea of what is good for them. So far we speak for everybody's child.

Occasionally their lawlessness and high spirits spill over into the juvenile court. Gangs form, and at first they merely disrupt the centre in which they operate. Later they become involved in some hooliganism that gets them into the courts. They are the same children. Some never take the extra step that gets them into the court and others do. Some, like Cynthia, have one lesson and then resolve 'Never again!' In the three years during which we kept notes of all the court cases that were brought to our notice, we dealt with some fifty cases of juvenile crime or 'trouble', involving some 100 adolescents. In a few instances only would we have said that the young person should have been singled out for special treatment. There was one who was a mild case of paranoia. His case will be given in detail as far as we can follow it. For at the time of writing, he was still in a Borstal institution and appeared to be making definite progress in patient and understanding hands. In a discussion with a group of boys and girls we found that out of twelve present nine had been in the court, at least for some trivial offence such as apple-scrumping, and that these twelve could name thirty-five others known to have convictions against them. We had dealings with

many probation officers; on numerous occasions we visited remand homes, police courts, and the boys' prison at Wormwood Scrubs. The following summary of many of the cases dealt with will give some idea of the sort of offences these young people committed. Such a summary cannot even indicate the degree of distress caused to the parents and to the youngsters themselves by their 'trouble'. We have to remember that to the young person adults and adult demands may be 'problems' that appear just as wayward and intractable as their escapades appeared to us. The list is chronological. It will be noted that larceny is the most frequent crime; there are a number of sexual offences, as noted in Chapter Six; there are fewer instances of gang violence and hooliganism, though we heard of many such crimes from our members. 'Care and protection' cases were fairly frequent, as might be expected with this age-group.

An asterisk has been put against those whom we would have expected to be problems, as in some way they appeared more anti-social than the norm. Where the young person was known to have a broken home the letters B.H. have been added. The description 'good home' is used in this chapter to signify a home where two parents live in amity, in a reasonable standard of comfort and take an interest in their children. Such a home is respected by neighbours and has no previous connection with law-breaking.

List of cases in which members of the Grosvenor were concerned

1. Six boys, four of them members, prosecuted for rowdy behaviour in main thoroughfare. Differential fine; two (thought to be leaders) fined £1, and two 10s.; two over 18 and two under 16.

2. Boy caught cycling after dusk without a front light. Fine 10s. (A common offence.)

3. Boy bicycle stealing. Sent to approved school where he settled down and did well. Excelled at football. No other offence until two years after return home, then found riding motorcycle carrying pillion passenger with no third party insurance and only provisional driving licence. Fined and licence taken away for one year.

4. Boy 'picked up' three times for dicing in street; fined 5s.;

let off with a caution; fined 10s., respectively. Attributed love of dicing to 'spirit of adventure'.

5. Boy found gambling at back of youth club by leader who fetched police; put on probation.

6. Boy stole some timber from employer. Employer took him back after case was heard and he was given one year's probation. No subsequent offence. This boy was found breaking open a cupboard at the Grosvenor at about the same time. His father had died in the Second World War and his mother had just remarried when crimes committed. (B.H.) Note: a visitor working on local authority administrative staff, looking round the Grosvenor one evening, singled this boy out saying, 'I should think that has been one of your problems.'

7. Boy stole lead and practised commercial homosexuality. Put on probation. Later joined Merchant Navy and jumped his ship in New Zealand where he settled.

8. Boy stealing in association with homosexual group; put on probation; next found 'loitering with intent'; sent to approved school. (B.H.)

9. Boy stealing lead from roof of parents' house—ran away and then gave himself up to police. Remanded in prison and then put on probation. Later found a girl friend and while in the army got engaged. No more trouble.

10. Boy associated in lead stealing case and also suspected of being in homosexual trade. Got hair dyed blonde as 'disguise' before giving self up. It acted quite otherwise as he shone like a beacon. No further offences. When 16½ got engaged; engagement lasted two years.

11. Boy, aged 14, 'care and protection' case. Mother with whom he lived suspected of keeping brothel. Boy remanded, and when visited said he wished to stay with and help look after widowed mother of whom very fond. Allowed to do so. No further trouble for the next four years, during which we were in close touch with him. Good at sports, popular and likeable lad, though prone to ridiculing others. (B.H.)

12. Will and his father suspected of stealing timber; case dismissed. Solicitor's bill £14. No further trouble although Will very bitter about police who shadowed them, he alleged, for some time.

13. Three members of the gymnastics class remanded in prison for 'incitement to riot' when concerned in a raid on a church hall Saturday dance, in which coshes were used and a hosepipe and sand. Case heard at Old Bailey. They were put on probation after being shown the cells. No further trouble with any but one. This one* was shortly afterwards imprisoned after conviction for assault (see Will's notes of those he interviewed to see why they had not attended Grosvenor classes in Chapter Four).

14. Alastair* (1) Stealing with others two soda water syphons; probation. (2) Breaking into a tool shed on a bomb site with others; no theft proved; sent to approved hostel out of London for one year. (3) Loitering on enclosed premises with intent, in company with one other boy; probation. (4) Stealing an empty wallet from the office of a youth club while dressed as a woman and in company with a girl; one year at approved school out of London. (5) Stealing a bicycle pump and some tools valued at 12s., in company with another boy; remanded for five weeks in prison and case sent to Quarter Sessions; Borstal sentence with a proviso that he receive psychological treatment. Home not broken but frequent quarrels between parents. Boy diagnosed as having mild paranoia and sent to psychological clinic for treating such cases, but after four interviews he was written off as a hopeless case. Inside the Grosvenor he was generally law abiding and he did not steal at camp; the only time he stole from members of our community during six years with us was when he went to visit an off-the-building class.

15. Guy found on 'enclosed premises' (school playground); case dismissed. Had been on probation before we knew him. (B.H.) Note: he was leader of our first gang.

16. Boy (16) associated in above case. For about a year on the fringe of many rackets such as razor-slashing gangs, and for a very short time was persuaded by wealthy woman to act as gigolo.

17. Tom Shelley loitering in the afternoon in West End in his best suit while on sick leave, after talking to fellow workers in a café during lunch time. Followed from this café to West End. Police drove him home to see Mrs. Shelley and made no charge after interview.

18. Boy (brother of Alastair) concerned in a street fight; lost two front teeth; fined. Later concerned in larceny case; remanded in prison, probation, and soon after joined Forces.

19. Two boys, several cases of larceny together; probation. One boy was concerned in one case of attempted theft at Grosvenor, and was the culprit who threw bottle through window at an early camp. At the age of 18 he 'had to get married'.

20. Boy* (17) stabbing a girl; probation.

21. Brother* of above attempted suicide when a schoolgirl jilted him. Father often away from home.

22. Boy (19)* brutal assault with theft; prison sentence. Good home and younger brother very different.

23. Boy member of large family and exceedingly good boxer, accused of robbery with violence; probation. Had to marry at age of 18.

24. Boy, 'care and protection' case; lived with father alone; suggestion was that he was neglected. Sent to live in foster-home for six months and then returned to father. No further trouble. Very reliable at Grosvenor. (B.H.)

25. Girl (15) rape; case dismissed though then cautioned. Girl no further trouble with law. (B.H.)

26. Girl (15) 'care and protection' case. Negroes involved. (B.H.)

27. Boy refused to attend army medical; received a summons. Baron accompanied him to court and explained case to psychologist who could see that boy was in a state of acute hysteria. Boy was Grade 4 and below army medical standard. After this he settled down to his job; the dermatitis from which he had been suffering cleared and at 19 he got married. He was half Hindu and a likeable person.

28. Three girls shoplifting; stole clothes from a department store; probation. One had a broken home and at the end of her probation, she married. The other two had homes with two parents and one was an only child. This one had no further trouble. The other one had to get married when just over 16 but she settled down happily after this.

29. Girl ran away from home in company with Marion. Probation. (B.H.)

30. Girl, 'care and protection' case; found soliciting after coming to live with sister, a known prostitute; sent to north of England to live with mother. (B.H.)

31. Boy (17) embezzling from employers with intention to elope with schoolgirl. Elopement took place and girl became pregnant and was sent to a home. Boy put on probation after money repaid on his behalf.

32. Boy loitering with intent and having burglar's tools in possession, in company with younger boy. Probation on condition he entered into an apprenticeship. Younger boy sent to an approved school. No further trouble with older boy.

33. Two girls (14), getting money by false pretences selling bogus raffle tickets. Remanded in home for three weeks and then put on probation.

34. Boy stealing whilst at an army camp. Remanded in gaol for three weeks and then put on probation. Returned to unit where he had an understanding C.O. He was the son of a broken home and often short of money. (B.H.)

35. Girl (18) took service pay book from fiancé's mother's kitchen drawer and claimed allowance by false pretences; probation. Boy forgave her, but mother very bitter. Later found stealing blouse from large store; probation. Engagement broken off. Girl went to live with father. (B.H.)

36. Boy remanded in prison, accused of carrying stolen goods from father's place of work, for use in freelance business run 'on the side' at home; probation. No further trouble. Was in the army a short time but discharged on medical grounds with nervous trouble.

37. Two girls remanded for two weeks in home, for prostitution in local pubs, etc. One 15 and the other not quite 15. One came from broken home and the other from a respectable home with army N.C.O. father and hard-working mother. The latter was ringleader and she was put on probation with a clause as to residence away from London. Her companion was to reside in a hostel. The other girls at Grosvenor talked about these two with horror but they wanted them to be given a further chance and not turned out in case this made them worse.

38. Boy (17), leader in case of assault and battery of cinema attendant. Previous trouble in same cinema when he kicked a

woman in stomach. Several boys were with him and ran away. One gave himself up as an accomplice but case against him dismissed. Ringleader fined £3; came from a respectable home; father ex-N.C.O. Elder brother head boy of a grammar school where he was good at work and sport. This boy always a problem and a bully when in a crowd, yet had many likeable qualities. He said woman he kicked made sexual advances to him. But he often behaved as a hooligan when no such excuse existed.

39. Boy (16) fought three policemen. One ordered him to go to the back of a cinema queue saying he had forced his way in. This crashing the queue was a regular Sunday practice as the queue was mainly Grosvenor members. Tom Shelley, who witnessed the scene, said this boy had not 'gate-crashed' this time. Tom went to the police and said, 'Arrest me instead. I meant to push in that queue.' But by this time the boy had had to be held down by three policemen and they had their charge. He was fined 10s. Headline in local paper: 'Bandit of 16'.

40. Two sisters took seven boys home one evening while their mother was out. Noisy party with kissing games and pillow-fight in bedroom. Boys went wild and neighbours complained of noise. Mother very angry, called police; girls taken to a remand home. One sister excelled at table tennis; had been to an approved school and had run away, but we found her co-operative. Two of the boys our members; five from a neighbouring youth club. This was not the first party these girls had held. Headmistress of school where younger girl went pleaded with her mother to have her home again and the mother agreed. Other sister remanded a further week and then allowed home on probation. This girl returned self-consciously to the Grosvenor, and when she was received as if nothing had happened was extraordinarily grateful. She was advised to find a new interest and one nice quiet boy-friend. Later she was sent to approved school for persistent truancy from place of employment. This girl had lived with her grandmother for some years and while at the approved school was encouraged to keep in touch with her grandmother in another part of the country so that we lost touch with her. The other girl stayed with her mother quite happily.

41. Boy stealing lead; probation. A likeable boy who excelled

at sport and gave us little trouble. Had been expelled from a local youth club. Chief fault sudden rages.

42. Two boys—larceny; probation. One came from a good home and one from a 'difficult' home. First boy unreliable; steps were taken to educate him.

43. Boy of 18 charged with causing grievous bodily harm to girl of 16 and with having carnal knowledge of this girl before she was 16 and with her consent. They had been one of the pairs we had had to distract from their one interest, which was love-making, at a summer camp. Back at the Grosvenor we had insisted that they keep the one-class-a-week rule and they had therefore not come near the place for some nine months until the night of the assault, which happened in the street. The girl's parents had discovered the pair together in their flat and had said the association must cease. The boy had threatened to beat the girl if she refused to see him any more. The girl was from a good home although she had been a trifle spoiled. The boy was from a rougher and broken home.

44. Boy stole money from place of employment. Sent to approved school where he did well. He had been no trouble to us until the session before he went to approved school, when he did not attend the Grosvenor but spent all his time at the pictures. His sister was found taking money from till in our canteen. He made good later. (B.H. but 'stepfather' kind to children.)

45. Boy (17½) stole ties from his employer and got other boys to 'flog' them for him; probation.

46. Boy (16), larceny: probation. (B.H.)

47. Four girls, 'care and protection' cases. Two were sisters, living with a widowed mother who worked in a theatre and left them to be seen to bed by their grandmother who lived in her own flat a bus ride away. Another lived with both parents who had, before she was born, been accused of bigamy. The fourth girl lived with her mother, who was separated from her husband, and who was really the cause of the trouble as she had gone away for the night, leaving her daughter alone in the flat. This girl had asked the others to stay with her. Their parents agreed that all three do so and gave them cocoa and biscuits before they went off to the fourth girl's flat. It was the habit of these girls to sleep at each other's houses. On the way back to

the flat they met two 14-year-old boys, both Grosvenor members, and they invited them in to have a cup of tea. One refused but the other accepted. When they suggested that he should go home as they were going to bed, he said it was late and he would get into fearful trouble if he went home; couldn't he stay the night? They agreed and he slept in his clothes on a couch and the girls slept all together in the one large bed. The boy's mother informed the police that he had not come home. The police investigated and put all the girls in a remand home as 'in need of care and protection'. They were due to take part in a Grosvenor show while they were away and they were very disappointed. The case was dismissed in the juvenile court. It was suggested by the police that the boy, who was young for his age, and under-sized, be given sex education; but he stayed away from the Grosvenor for six months after this. The girl from the 'bigamous' home was good-tempered, reliable, versatile and amenable to discipline, being well above the average in athletics and dancing and talented in singing. She was loyal to her friends. The two sisters were loyal, good humoured, and purposeful in many activities.

48. Boy (17) 'having carnal knowledge of' girl of 14½. Girl was thought to be pregnant and parents were threatening to take the case to court. The girl's sister had had a child by an American soldier. On early termination of pregnancy, parents dropped the case. Boy came from a difficult home where the father was a tyrant. This boy was loyal, public-spirited and one of the nicest boys we had. His difficulty was the fact that he was strongly sexed and capable of generous affection. He had no outlet for affection at home and several of the girls he liked were not yet ready for such ardour.

49. Boy (14) charged with shopbreaking in school dinner hour. His mother had left his father and from the day she left the boy became a bed-wetter. This made him most unpopular with the 'aunt' who 'did' for his father. He became very difficult at school and was backward at reading as he had missed a good deal of his early schooling. He was designated 'educationally sub-normal' and sent to a special school where he was more resourceful than the other pupils and brighter. He became a gang leader and planned shopbreaking as a lunch-time diver-

sion. In discussion we had always found him highly intelligent. After much trouble he was re-examined and found of normal intelligence, and he went to an approved school to learn farming. He did very well but the bed-wetting did not stop, and when he came to seek employment he could not get it on a farm because of the difficulty of lodgings. He returned home and for a few months worked with his father, but soon the relations between him and his aunt worsened and he left home and went to live with some known homosexuals who were less fastidious. Certainly, his stepmother could be forbidding; she once challenged the Steward in the office with the command: 'This bed-wetting must stop.' Apart from this disability this boy had much on his side. When our friends Mr. and Mrs. Winch called to see us after a meeting of the Cactus Society with a case full of specimens which they showed to a group in the office, they reported that the whole group were pleasing to talk to but one boy in particular asked really pertinent and intelligent questions about cultivating cactus. It was this boy. When he re-visited the Grosvenor in 1954 his disabilities had cleared up, he was in regular employment, had learned to read and married. (B.H.)

50. Boy ($15\frac{1}{2}$) ran away from home and was not found for six weeks. His father very stern and strict; used to thrash him often. We only knew him for five months during which he was irregular in attendance. We met his father once after his disappearance. The father confessed that perhaps he had been too strict and thrashed him too hard.

These are only some of the cases where our help was sought. Details of the hobbies and other than criminal pursuits of many individuals mentioned have been added so that it may be clear that those who found themselves at odds with the law were by no means a rock-bottom group of toughs who did not really form part of our homogeneous Institute community. They were often key men and women, as it were, and some cultural or athletic activity was hindered by their absence in a remand home or a prison. They were the ordinary adolescent in his unlucky moments. Many of them made good, as we have shown, in their later development. Many came from good homes. We had a vast number of members from broken homes who never

got into the courts at all. Some had mothers who went out to work and others had mothers who stayed at home and devoted themselves to their family. None of the alleged major causes of delinquency were present in a majority of the cases cited. We wished we could find some easy explanation as to why some youngsters survived the experience of the broken home and remained law-abiding while others broke down; why some youngsters survived the experience of a sergeant-major father and others, like Cedric and the girl in Case 37 and the boy in Case 38, broke down under it; why children of the same family, such as that in Case 38, developed either into highly successful citizens or into black sheep; either, like Alastair and his brother, got into trouble, or, like their sister Helen, turned out the most honest and generous of our girls. In all cases there was an element of luck; for every youngster convicted many more do the same thing but are not caught. Crimes seemed to go in crazes, as most things do with adolescents. Just as hair styles and slang and boys' suits all follow the fashion of the moment, so crimes seemed to follow a fashion. For example, a certain adult group of crooks may be working through a district at a certain time, leading many young people into some particular racket. It may be that the young influence each other. The only steady and regular offence was stealing, and in a time of high prices and low morality, when black markets and scrounging were widely condoned, this was not altogether unexpected.

It is often said that law-breaking youth is 'unclubbable' and that certain gangs, such as those incorporated into the Barge Club experiment, could not be absorbed into a normal community of adolescents. This may be so, but it was not our experience. We tried to absorb everybody into our community at the Grosvenor, however difficult and dissimilar they might be, and to avoid expelling anyone. Only two people were ever expelled; the boy in Case 21 was expelled, as he was the ringleader of a large gang who had got the place a very bad name when we took over. We inherited a great deal of trouble, such as that in Cases 5, 6, 13, 19, 22 and 23, and we persevered with all these individuals. The other cases quoted concerned youngsters who had joined while we were running the Grosvenor. We endeavoured to treat each member as an individual in his own

right and to treat all individuals with respect. The Institute became a place where any difficulties, emotional or otherwise, could be frankly discussed and where boys and girls could meet each other freely and openly. Wide divergences in taste, temperament and degree of integration in a community of some three to four hundred boys and girls aged 14–21 offered plenty of scope for practice in toleration and adjustment. We constantly discussed our difficulties over certain individuals with their fellow-members. No one can be as intolerant or as hard on an offender as his fellow adolescents. We were often told by our students that we were too soft, and we always explained why the particular person was more in need of sympathy than condemnation, or in the case of a gang we said we did not wish to turn them out and get them into the police courts if, by a little trouble, we could save them.

We watched many 'problem' children grow up and attain success and respect, first in our community and later in the wider world. But before such equilibrium is reached an individual is liable to experience many vicissitudes; at times of distress and acute discouragement many came back for assistance. We witnessed no sudden conversions or changes of heart. Growing into life appeared a slow and gradual process with many relapses into less adult attitudes and behaviour. A weakness noticed early, such as that of a boy who got into debt at an early camp, would often be seen to reappear from time to time in the following years. Some characteristics were seen to be fleeting; others died hard. This particular boy lived with his mother, who was separated from his father, and he was just near enough to his home to be able to come home most week-ends. This cost him 10s. for his fare and he smoked and would take his girl out. He was thus short of money as he used to make his mother an allowance. He had less to spend than many of his friends. He had always been bad at managing what little money he had. At camp he had spent his pocket money on girls till it was exhausted and then he took to the cheaper and healthier pleasures of the seashore. Then he began to manage better. It was when he was stationed at this army camp with the temptation to come home that he got into financial difficulties which ended in serious trouble. Eventually he made good but he is a case where

an early weakness can be seen to recur in the later developmen- of the boy or girl.

It may be noticed that very few cases have been asterisked, and it may be suggested that our youngsters were so abnormally criminal that in such a community even severe cases would not appear 'criminal types' or 'unclubbable'. But this was not the case. Many of these people were steady in employment and a large number had belonged to local youth clubs before they joined the Grosvenor. It is highly unlikely that they differed from their relatives and friends outside the Grosvenor to any great extent. In the case of Alastair, who was an exhibitionist and contra-suggestive so that if he was ever forbidden to do anything he would immediately do it and ask to be punished, the amount of time spent in trying to weld him into the community and refusing to be angry with him while never appearing weak or soft, did often seem disproportionate. But if he had been given the psychological treatment of which he seemed so greatly in need during much of the time we had him with us (that is to say, between sentences to reside elsewhere), he would still have had to learn to fit into the ordinary everyday world, and it seemed to us that if we tried to absorb him into our community this might be some preparation. Luckily his very remarkable ability at art and clay-modelling helped us, as everyone admired the model of his we kept in the office, and this led to his acceptance as an odd artist by the others. We tried some group-therapy work on him, but he had a quick intelligence at times and he sensed the purpose of the group meeting; he refused to come into the room, but every now and then banged loudly on the door and disturbed everyone else. Later he came in and at once became interested and contributed to the discussion. We never flattered him by showing perturbation or anger at his behaviour, although he tried on us all the tricks he tried on his father who, as we noted in Chapter One, was very bad-tempered indeed. Seeing us deal with him and trying to help us to do so was an education for many of the others.

The young need to learn to deal with the difficult people as well as with the more popular and conforming ones. If ever a renegade earned the extreme dislike of a large number of members we usually condemned his actions, but found some mitiga-

ting circumstance to explain him to the others; in this way we never had an alliance between authority and the good boys and girls against the black sheep. On the contrary, the black sheep felt they had a friend in us and very often came for their punishment. Guy, whose gang had been involved in smashing up a room, telephoned the following day to inform the Baron that he had to go on an errand for his mother that night but would be up to take his punishment the next evening. The more law-abiding felt flattered as they were taken into our confidence and asked to suggest ways and means to bring out the best in the more intractable ones. Whether all this had any effect on the ease with which our delinquent members were assimilated can only be surmised. All the while we appeared to be spending a great deal of time on certain individuals, but as the mass were in our confidence and were often asked to do some of the jobs we had to leave while we dealt with the trouble-makers, they were also being educated through the others. The adult who ignores the tantrums of an acutely neurotic boy and takes no notice of insults, for which he would reprimand a less neurotic member, can at the same time explain to the more normal youngster why he does so, and thus give the latter some understanding of the problems of human behaviour. Some apathetic near-criminal girls were for a time allowed to break the class-attendance rule while they were being conditioned to purposeful activity. A very active and versatile girl complained to the Steward that she too would like to be apathetic and only do dancing. The Steward said, 'Life is not fair. You have a happy home, certain talents, and some pretence to good looks, and you have many boy friends. These girls have none of these advantages. I have to start from scratch with them and help them to catch up to where you are already, so far as they ever can. But if I let you be lazy and slip back, that would be very bad for you. You have a lot to learn still; you can do better than you are doing even now. It will be a compliment to you if I am hard on you.'

It is often assumed that there are adequate services for the treatment of the maladjusted. It is not generally realised how unco-ordinated they are. We had one case that illustrates this lack of co-ordination. We advised a girl to go to a hospital as she was run down and suffering from whitlows. We asked the Care

Committee if it would be possible for her to be sent to a convalescent home for a holiday, as she lived with a mother who had seven other children. Their father had had an industrial accident of a very mutilating kind and it had affected his reason, so that he had finally been certified. As is the habit of many adolescent girls, this one made eyes at the young doctor who was dealing with her whitlow. He sent her to the psychological department. Here she was given a 20-minute examination by the hospital psychologist who had some dozen students present. Her eyes often strayed to these young men and her answers were consequently vague and dreamy. She was diagnosed as suffering from a mental disease and her mother was persuaded to sign a form consenting to her admission as a voluntary patient into a mental hospital. It was not until she took her there that she realised that it was a mental hospital; she had been under the impression that this was the convalescent home to which we had asked that the girl be admitted. Fortunately we were in a position to refute any suggestion of pathological mental instability, and after certain difficulties and with the goodwill of the hospital P.S.W. a report was presented on the case. The girl was discharged within ten days. To give her confidence when she returned, the Baron set her a mass-observation test. Each evening she had to note how many persons were in certain recreation rooms and what they were doing at intervals of half-an-hour. She did this regularly for a week, and as she handed in her report she remarked in a horrified tone, 'I have not written it down, but I think you ought to know that a lot of gambling is going on behind your back.'

In addition to case work and attendance at court, we tried some general treatment of problem adolescents. As in the case of sex, we arranged a lecture by a young barrister on the law as it affects the young person. The room was very nearly empty save for Buster, Owen and Tilly and a few of wider general interests. The Steward asked Cedric and a few of his friends if they were going as they seemed at a loose end, and Cedric said it did not interest him very much, and certain of his friends, including Cases 5, 6, 11, 19 and 23, also denied interest. The Steward left the lecturer in the room, having listed for him the sort of crimes that his audience either had committed or were

likely to get 'picked up' for, and suggested that he dealt with these; she then went to look on the lower floors for likely listeners. Returning in five minutes she saw him talking to some thirty enthralled young people, many of whom were asking questions. As in the sex lecture they had not wanted authority to know their deep interest, so in the crime lecture they had not all wanted it to be known that they were on probation. Nearly all the questioners started off, 'I have a friend. He got into trouble for . . . What would you say he could have done . . .?'

In 1954 we had a talk on the law and how it affected them by Miss Mary Roney, who invited questions. One boy had a summons for 'jumping' the traffic lights on his pedal cycle and he was very disturbed indeed over it and entirely antagonistic to 'Them', meaning the law. When it was explained that the magistrates represented people like him, that it was to our advantage to have safe roads, and that we should none of us be safe if motorists jumped the lights, this conception of the law, as something planned for and not against them, seemed quite a fresh and new one.

From lectures and discussions we obtained our first knowledge of the 'criminal' underworld in the Grosvenor. We probed the depths and began to learn what went on and what worries our students really had. About this time Guy and his gang were doing a great deal of damage to furniture and equipment. The gang had formed during the 11-weeks' summer closure in opposition to a street gang of long standing and ugly reputation. The incipient feud between the gangs was temporarily composed by a romance between the sister of a member of the street gang and a member of our gang. Guy had energy, zest, and a certain reliability. His gang was never publicly censured or ostracised, and eventually they became absorbed into the community. As they had not been made the butt of stern critics they could become absorbed without loss of face. The Conger, as a great friend of Guy, was loosely allied with this gang; but he was good at most sports and so was drawn into many other affiliations such as football teams (he played goal and once, when he let a goal through which lost us a league championship, he went off food for a whole week-end). Tilly was a close friend of the sister of one of the gang members so she was very concerned. We dis-

cussed ways and means of dealing with this gang in the Brains Trust and here is part of the discussion.

Gangs

TILLY: If you are a weak character it bolsters you up to be one of a gang. If you don't count for much at home you can dare to do all sorts of things in a gang and it helps your pride. Most times you are insignificant; in the gang you feel strong.

SLIM (then 15 years): If a boy is unhappy at home he may feel extra lonely. Feeling lonely is awful. Once I went skating alone and I know how dreadful that was. I had thought it would be all right but it wasn't; I felt quite miserable. If you always do things by yourself then a gang would be a real relief; you'd gladly join it. When I was 12 I belonged to a kids' gang. We had battles with stones; it was fun and it was not meant to be vicious, but if you stay on in a kids' thing when you are older it is bad.

WILL: The vicious gang is made up of weaklings who feel stronger in a group; often these groups have a good leader who uses his courage in the wrong direction. Younger hangers-on are soon attracted, as a gang has entertainment value and often covers up their minor mischief. These gang members often have experience of the utter depths of loneliness branded on their subconscious mind, as Slim suggests. In the beginning I felt lonely at the Grosvenor; there were cliques here. Imagine what it must be like to be really lonely.

KIT: My little brother is delicate and has a slight speech defect. He has a gang of school and street friends. Sometimes the leader of this gang expels him. Nothing upsets him so much as this. Once he was expelled for three days. He sat at home and moped and wouldn't eat or drink. He won't eat much at the best of times but my mother got really worried during these three days. Then the gang had him back and he picked up again in health. When I was evacuated to South Wales we London boys had a gang. We had to band together in self-defence, as the Welsh boys attacked us.

SLIM: Yes . . . I had that experience when I was evacuated too.

GEORGE: Two boys at work belong to a gang that goes round pulling up gateposts and reversing signposts. I asked them why

they do this and they said it was the spirit of adventure. If anyone tries to stop them doing this they fight and often they take prisoners. It is left to their leader to decide what to do with the prisoners.

BUSTER: Not all gangs are bad. Robert and Desmond and I were in a gang for some time with two boys who afterwards got into a lot of trouble, as the Baron knows (Cases 20 and 21). But while they were ganged up with us they kept out of trouble.

The fear of loneliness, the need for some method of bolstering up self-esteem, and the pleasure of knowing oneself an essential and accepted member of some group are deep and general adult feelings, as well as a motive force with adolescents. Tilly mentioned that Guy seldom seemed to want to be at home and that he had spent Christmas Day with a friend. He must be lonely at home, she felt, if he had to spend Christmas Day away.

When we started to hold impromptu discussions in order to investigate the underworld in the Grosvenor we were surprised to find that for three weeks running, whatever subject we discussed, the conversation always came back to razor-slashing gangs. Guy's cousin had been beaten up by a well-known gang and as a result had been in hospital for some weeks. Arthur seemed to have the subject of gangs very much on his mind. He was at that time a driver's mate on a lorry, and through his work he was in touch with members of two well-known gangs of evil reputation. He had been invited to raid a dance-hall and had agreed to go, and said wasn't it astonishing that he had fallen asleep that Sunday afternoon and when he woke it was too late to go. Jake, a 16-year-old dark boy with an intense interest in flashy clothes and haircuts, and no settled hobby although he had a distinct aptitude for art, had a few weeks before asked if he could be enrolment secretary. As he had confessed that his friends expected him to be a gay dog who did nothing at the Grosvenor, and that if he applied himself to art they would ridicule him, his request was agreed to with alacrity. At one group discussion he revealed that he had enrolled three members of a well-known gang who carried razors and coshes. Lionel knew about this gang; he appeared to be in touch with four notorious gangs in London. We suspected that the

three new members were the reason for the general apprehension.

Jake's very decorative sister had just jilted a boy named Ivor for one of these three. Ivor, who was upset at his loss, jeered at Jake and his girl as they were going home from the Grosvenor one night with the three members, who had girls with them. Jake reported how, when Ivor jeered at him and his girl, these boys set upon him and beat him up. Jake said with happy indolence, 'They fought my battle for me while I stood by. I didn't so much as get dust on my gaberdine suit.'

Gang trouble often starts with a girl and we suspected that the fight was really over Beatrice, Jake's sister. Anyway Jake's triumph was shortlived. A week later he came into the office in a state of extreme hysteria. The rivalry between Ivor and his sister's new admirer had grown bitter. That evening, when both boys called to take her out and she elected to go with the new gang boy, Ivor had wanted to fight. The gang boys had now gone home to get some of the really tough guys and older members of this gang to start a real fight. As the news got about, a nervous tension spread through the building. All sorts of boys who had been in touch with various rackets, such as Case numbers 7, 8, 11 and 32, stood about, some in the street and some on the stairs, looking apprehensive and yet sniffing for blood, apparently impelled by the same sort of horrified fascination that attracts a crowd to a really bad street accident. Jake felt that his own position was most perilous of all as he would be hated by both sides. Kind friends told him he would be unlikely to survive this night. The hero of Case 7 advised him to jump out of an upper window.

The Baron said if they did arrive and there was to be a battle, it could take place in the gymnasium with the gloves on. He cleared all stragglers from the street corner although Lionel kept going back there. As the enemy had not arrived by closing time, the chief parties to the dispute were asked to see the Baron next day. Jake was afraid to go home and the Baron offered to watch him down the road, but in the end Keith and several stalwarts saw him home. Later that night Ivor had his fight with only one boy near his house.

The next night the Baron saw the three new members from

the outside gang and told them that he did not think outsiders should be brought in to settle Grosvenor disputes. He had no objection to members of outside gangs joining the Grosvenor provided they did not introduce the gang into our internal affairs. The three boys said they had to put up a show to save their self-respect with our members but, in future, they were willing to settle all disputes with the gloves on. They wished to continue to be members of the Institute.

The Baron talked to Ivor alone over a cup of tea. When asked why he had got involved with this gang he explained that he could have 'taken it' if his girl friend had chucked him for a 'better man', but when she preferred a little upstart like this boy it was too much to take. It was explained to him that one of the sadder things in life was just this habit of the most beautiful girls preferring the scruffy man to the fine and upright one like Ivor. There was no accounting for their unintelligent taste. Better men had to learn to suffer without fighting.

Lionel and Arthur who had hung about on the street corner were dealt with in public. Arthur was told that there was no sense in doing what he was doing so often at present, standing on the edge of trouble. Lionel was not very tall at this time although he lengthened later, and his pugnacity was rather that of the little man who feels slighted. The Baron, who was much larger, said to him amid laughter, 'I am thinking of hiring you as a bodyguard.'

Despite its incidental humour we were very lucky over the timing of this episode. Through our persistent probing of the underworld we had been warned that trouble was brewing by the fact that every discussion led us back to gang-warfare. Had the enemy turned up in large numbers the need to save face might have led to real bloodshed, as some of our boys habitually carried razors 'just for protection', and this gang had razors and far heavier equipment. Later one of our boys stated that when going to another district they always felt the need for 'protective weapons'.

We have seen Alastair, at one end of the scale, always wanting to create a sensation, secretly dreaming of winning laurels at sport and athletics but too impatient to train to be one of a team; gifted at art and capable of great application when working on

a clay model, but resenting instruction. His model, which took several weeks to complete, was a copy (from a photograph) of Michelangelo's David, but when finished and fired it looked remarkably like a copy of Danti's Reclining Nude in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Catherine Ensor, his instructor, could not believe that it was not a copy of this as she came to the Grosvenor after he had finished it. She drew attention to the fact that Danti and his school were inspired by the Renaissance tradition but belonged to a more neurotic era, and it may have been significant that Alastair's work approximated to this era in spirit and appearance. He regarded this piece as one of his best as he had lost himself in it, and he once said, 'Sometimes I think I was right out of myself when I did that. I am not sure if I can ever do anything like it again.'

And from Alastair we gravitate to Cedric with his strict standards of conduct in certain directions and his weakness for drink. In connection with road vehicles he seemed to have no conscience; his first offence was a bicycle theft and his later offences were riding motor cycles without a licence but with a pillion rider. He was told he would not be clever enough to get away with this but he had to learn the hard way. They had all been frequently warned that it is not possible to get away with crime, but they seemed to think they were the exception and they would be lucky. The boy in Case 36 offered the Steward a cheap lucky charm one night saying, 'It had to bring me luck but it didn't. Can you take it?'

Wandering round disconsolately with this boy was Ferdie who had been 'off work' suffering from some nervous complaint for some weeks. He is described in Case 27. He said that having no money through long sickness was depressing; it got you into a low state and at a time like this you got reckless and, 'You do a shop. I haven't yet, but I understand it.' Later in a discussion group Cynthia, who was never tactful, raised her usual problem about the danger of going to a certain dance-hall where 'coloured men go and pursue you'; she feared rape. Ferdie, being half Hindu, bridled at this and asked, 'Why blame everything on coloured men? When I was a kid I got beaten up because I was coloured. I had to join a gang for a time for protection.' Groups selected at random tend thus to get each

other on the exposed nerve, and cause revelations of worries, disturbances and background in general.

It was with an over-sexed boy that we failed. He was the other of the two that we expelled. He had returned to this country with his father, a painter, who had taken the family to America and failed there. He had acquired a transatlantic insolence that enraged Mr. Baker the schoolkeeper and Miss Reeves the canteen attendant. Both said he must go or they would. After all the wilder and more destructive boys we had persuaded Mr. Baker to bear with, this one reduced him to fury. He wrote the most pornographic messages on many of the blackboards in the school building, and some of these did not get cleaned till the day-school staff came next morning. Girls complained that his embraces were not just puppy play. The Baron called a meeting for 'men only' and said this pornographic chalking on blackboards had got to stop. Neither this boy nor his inseparable friend attended this meeting. Those who did attend were told just what the Baron thought of people who wrote on blackboards and lavatory walls. The boys present talked among themselves. They were sure it was 'those two queers'; no one present had done it. The meeting hummed with gossip as did the canteen afterwards.

Two weeks later these two boys entered a crowded office and the one who had returned from America said to the Baron, 'May we speak to you alone?' He was asked to say what he had to say there and then, as a group of boys were completing membership forms and they were too busy to listen. He looked gravely at the Baron for a few minutes and said, 'I hear you called a meeting of the Grosvenor the other night especially to call us little bastards.' The Baron looked surprised, and hiding his admiration for their sublime effrontery in thus bringing the war into enemy territory, replied, 'So I called a special meeting of the Grosvenor to call you little bastards? I must be mad. I can't remember doing so. I can remember having something to say about some unknown boys who had left filthy writing on school blackboards for little children to see. Have you really come to confess that you were those writers?' No, they had not. They had done no such thing. They had come to demand an apology. They were told they would get no apology; if they did not like

the way the Baron treated them they had their remedy; they need not come here any more. Cornered, the friend tore up his membership form and both stalked out with dignity. And as they walked away, the boys who were completing forms of application for membership proferred their subscription. The Steward said, 'Surely you can never want to join a place where, at any moment and without warning, the boss may call you a little bastard?' 'Yes please . . we do,' was the eager reply. Slim's brother who was one of them added, 'You might write at the end of my details of birth the words "born in wedlock".'

We had our laughs but they did not mask our failure here. This boy was going to join a ship in the Merchant Navy in six weeks' time so we could hold him to his 'resignation'. When he had gone to sea and his friend asked to return to the Grosvenor, he was welcomed back. But if we had not so conveniently got rid of this boy, who was never without contraceptives in his pocket, who enraged the schoolkeeper and the canteen helper besides reducing many girls to tears, what technique could have been applied in his case? His friend was a weaker character and easier to deal with and after he had been back some time the Steward caught him out in some minor crime and discussed it with him in a friendly 'between-adults' manner; but, even in the absence of the other boy, it took two years before he and she reached a stage of mutual trust. The boy we expelled had a certain quickness of wit, but he had an ingrained attitude of opposition to authority as such. In a sense he saw through the friendly atmosphere at the Grosvenor and realised that the final control, when things were getting out of hand, was always with the authorities. He was a misfit. A way of dealing with such people has to be found. They, above all, have to be house-trained for life in society. They are not only problems to us, like those who break up furniture; they are also a problem to the girls of this world who have to be protected. To segregate such characters begs the question. All organisations have their limitations and it is by finding those limitations that the next step may be made.

That is why this chapter has ended not with a peroration but with a failure. We could have quoted Alastair's letter from an open Borstal, where he had been for some time, saying, 'I must have been very silly at the time when I got into trouble. When

I look back, I think I must have been in a dream, but now I realise there are other people as well as myself. Though I was never a greedy type, I don't think I gave the thoughts to others that I should have done, in a way. I don't regret coming here—it's opened my sight up.' To quote that would be to draw attention to the success of this Borstal and the chance this boy had to live away from a violent father and learn to reflect. But what we are concerned to do is to provoke thought on those problems which have not been solved.

Chapter Eight

ENDS AND MEANS IN INFORMAL EDUCATION

'The great law of culture is: let each become all that he is capable of being.'

THOMAS CARLYLE

One night in the office a group of boys were describing a 'smashing film' that they had seen. It dealt with prehistoric man. In it were featured man-eating savages who watched their enemies die in agony, and even facilitated the process by pushing them over precipices to which they hazardously clung with silent sang-froid. There was, of course, a heroine in this film. She was 'nearly civilised' as she came from a more refined tribe and of course she was loved by one of the savages. But she let him know that she did not like his man-eating ways. All sorts of prehistoric phenomena were introduced as background to their dramatic romance; perhaps the tensest moment of all was when the 'poor savage who loved the lady from the better tribe . . . she had tried to civilise him, see? . . . was terribly worried as he rode his horse towards a red-hot volcano. . . .' It was enough to upset any man for 'you see, he thought the lady he loved was covered up with red-hot lava . . . see? . . .' Five delighted boys took part in this recital and, at its close, the Baron whispered to the Steward, 'How can we compete?' We never found a complete answer. Probably no educationalist ever has.

Anyone who would define the needs of young people growing up in cities and discover methods of interesting and educating them in their leisure time to develop the gifts they possess, has to face the challenge of commercial entertainment; the school-leavers' reaction against 'school' and childhood status, the desire for excitement and adventure, and the widespread apathy partly induced by environment. We list below a few of the conclusions

to be drawn from these experiments on the job while catering for the educational needs of urban adolescents. In education, as in all the human sciences, nothing final can be stated. Every new approach, or the revival of every outdated approach, raises a host of new problems upon which immediate research could be concentrated with benefit to all concerned.

The Dangers of Illiteracy

First and all-important is the need of all adolescents for further education in a wider sense than that implied in technical and vocational training or classroom teaching. An undiluted diet of passive entertainment during leisure coupled with employment where the basic skills learned at school, such as reading and writing, are not in regular use can lead to rapid loss of literacy between leaving school and the call-up at 18.

No one really likes to be illiterate and most young people are ashamed of it. Even those who at school refused to learn and made disturbances in class and ridiculed the teacher, really wish they could read. A feeling of shame and the fear of being found illiterate can lead to undesirable social behaviour. What starts as a boastful attempt to prove oneself as good as those who can read and write with ease, may end as anti-social behaviour and lead to the police court. After call-up it is necessary to be able to write letters home and to girl friends. For illiterate girls the inability to write to service boy friends can be equally frustrating.

'Perhaps,' said Helen of her father, 'his real trouble is that he is not very satisfied with himself. That may make him so bad-tempered.' Human beings who could have developed their ability and led more varied and interesting lives are apt to be neurotic and bad-tempered. Dissatisfaction with oneself can have grave personal and social consequences as the statistics for broken homes and nervous illnesses might suggest. Apathy at adolescence is likely to lead to boredom and later to dissatisfaction.

At adolescence there is still hope. Every human being has some capacity that can be discovered and developed. Talents can only be kept alive by exercise and use. This applies to reading and writing as well as to physical skills and special aptitudes. In the period immediately after leaving school and starting

work the young person has to be persuaded to use the skills he has already learned and so retain them, and to undertake the necessary drudgery to acquire new skills. Once he is interested and wants to acquire the skill, the drudgery involved brings its own discipline. The task is to make him interested enough to want to learn. It has been made plain in these pages that education can only be given with the consent of the pupil. Any youngster can escape into a day-dream and defeat, by inattention, the effort to impart information. For the school-leaver there is the natural reaction against school as a reminder of a childhood status unsuitable for a young worker. At puberty the youngster feels adult, and some recognition of this new stage of development is desirable. Learning and school subjects need to be re-presented at this stage, to be shown as part of a wider life that is now opening out. Academic education has to be augmented with some training in the understanding, enjoyment and control of the new and powerful emotions that are developing at this stage. Vocational training has to be combined with some social training. How can all this be attempted and what methods have been tried?

Scope for the Emotions

Those who plan a curriculum for the young worker or the undergraduate have always to face the rival claims in their students of an urgent lust for life. This desire for ever new experience and emotional fulfilment can lead to the cutting of university lectures or evening classes at the technical college. It can lead to outbreaks of horseplay through sheer animal spirits, to apparent irresponsibility that exasperates older people; and it can also lead to the joys and sorrows of early love affairs. Unless all learning or vocational skill is to be regarded as a dry-as-dust affair for the rather under-sexed, some method has to be found of assisting the fully sexed to develop emotionally, while leaving some of their abundant life and energy free to pursue learning. Kindness and understanding are necessary in the learned professions and among foremen and skilled workmen. These attributes come partly from a harmonious emotional development and it is socially and economically important to devise educational techniques that encourage them. How can young people

be persuaded to concentrate on something other than their overwhelming emotions?

Personal Interest

Adolescence is an intensely personal age. Personal and emotional problems loom large for each individual and those adults who would educate these young people must know each student personally. Each has a delicate self-respect, a precarious sense that he or she is now adult; they need to be treated as fellow adults as well as persons in their own right. It is necessary to avoid treating them in the mass. The tastes and aspirations of the mass (as we noted when the party we took to Canterbury preferred to visit the cinema to the cathedral) are lower than those of the individuals composing it. It is the individual we must work upon, for even in an age of statistics it is not possible to teach impersonal units. We found that it was profitable to introduce simple psychology and the study of the self at this most personal stage. By this means the youngster charged with emotion could be led to see himself with a certain detachment. In group discussion of personal problems young people come to see that others too are beset with problems as serious as their own, with even deeper tragedies.

Individuals in a Group

Oblique methods have many advantages. Individuals obsessed with their own problems must be conditioned to living in society where mutual as well as personal obligations have to be met. Self-study in groups is one way of being personal in a social setting. We used the method of group discussion to reduce ridicule in our community. By discussing our difficulties in dealing with ridicule with groups containing most of the arch-ridiculers and many others, we were able to permeate the community in depth. If we are to devise a technique for getting on personal terms with 400–500 young people in an evening institute or youth centre, the group method may be the answer; it is more effective than lecturing isolated individuals or the whole mass at once. Social training can thus arise naturally out of personal and emotional training.

The Consent of the Learner

How did we persuade those who were least academic to engage in purposeful activity? We started with the things they enjoyed as pastimes and encouraged them to acquire skill in them. Table tennis had always been popular at the Grosvenor. The equipment bore signs of wear and tear through rough playing and neglect. It seemed a good idea to get a first-class player as coach. We were fortunate indeed in persuading a player of the calibre of Bernard Crouch to undertake this work. He soon had a group of keen players, such as Edgar, agreeing to play slowly while they 'un-learned' bad habits and acquired a better style. Beginners were encouraged by their ordeal to seek instruction before they got into bad habits. At first all but these few wanted to have their turn on the table and then to go off. They lacked the patience to stand and learn from seeing others coached. But gradually this attitude changed and by the next season the walls were as thickly lined with youngsters during table tennis coaching as they were for recreational dancing. The instructor played with everyone from the girl who had never handled a bat before to the captain of the senior team. All were welcome and most caught the atmosphere of vigorous interest that Bernard Crouch took into any hall. He sometimes varied the routine by staging an impromptu knock-out competition for an evening. The good players were taken to see international matches and some were encouraged to try to get into county teams. This coaching did a very great deal to get across to the members of the Grosvenor the real meaning of education seen as the need to take infinite pains to acquire an appropriate technique for doing those things one wants to do. They could accept the need for drudgery to achieve an understandable aim, such as playing table tennis.

Working Hard at Things they Like

Ballroom dancing was eventually used in a similar way. When we first had half an hour for recreational dancing at the end of the evening, crowds of boys stood round the walls and in the doorways talking loudly. When asked to learn to dance they said they would not go on the floor while better dancers were there to make them feel silly. They had to be found a beginners'

class where no onlookers were permitted. Gradually, as more could dance, a better standard of manners could be expected and demanded by those in charge. It will be remembered that in a discussion Simon said that the Conger really wanted to learn to dance but instead he stood around and ridiculed those who had the courage to take the floor. Dancing is thought of by the school-leaver as an adult pastime. All want to learn. If it is carefully supervised it helps to overcome a clumsy and awkward demeanour and to improve manners between the sexes. Good dancers have to be persuaded to dance with beginners and to help them. What is often a selfish and predatory pursuit has to be used for social training. Those who want to learn to dance will often work hard and then become good enough to take some medal or enter a competition.

Incentives

Working for medals introduces the whole question of incentives. We aimed at getting everyone doing something all the time. There were several classes every night and these were advertised. Those who regularly attended classes on other nights would be encouraged to play their own gramophone records on non-class nights, or to play chess or read a book or do some job, or work on a clay model that was half finished, or on a painting. No sooner did they ask for the necessary equipment than it was found for them, as we were trying to show them that leisure was a time for active pursuits not passive entertainment. There was the evening when a boy (see Case 39 in Chapter Seven) was chatting to the Steward in the office. Suddenly he said, 'Well I can't waste time talking here any longer. Can I have the radiogram please as I want to play my new records?' This was one of the best compliments the place ever had.

Incentives to be occupied we had in plenty, but what incentive to acquire skill did our classes offer? There is an idea that in further education learning should be its own reward and that no outside stimulus or competitive work is desirable. This may be an ideal though it is contrary to the best classical tradition. The Greeks used rewards, variety and colour in education and their culture was not weakened by healthy competition between students. We found that those of our classes that had outside incen-

tives thrived most. Judo had its grading tests as well as outside competitions; boxers trained to gain proficiency for boxing tournaments; our gymnastic teams entered competitions and gave displays—during the Festival of Britain they gave them in the arena.

Football training was popular because we ran two teams and by means of it boys got into the teams and then won some of their matches. It was an understood means to an end. Ron Gray the coach got players into well-known colts teams. This too was a further incentive. Oswald started getting girl supporters to watch matches as a means of paying for coaches to take the team to the pitch; the girls filled the coach and paid their fares, thus decreasing the cost of transport for the players. While Oswald was in the Services, Harry Daniels, the manager of our senior team, formed a supporters' club with a girl secretary. He also made the team financially self-supporting and they purchased a complete set of shirts, shorts and socks. All this incidental life that grew around football made the Grosvenor more of a community; it was social living as well as sport.

In art Arthur Shipman entered students for competitions; interesting work was framed and displayed in the office and other rooms; encouragement was always forthcoming. The drama class gave shows for parents; we entered drama competitions. In the early days the members of the cast could not be relied upon to rehearse regularly or even to turn up on the night of the show. With dramatics as with sport great stress was put upon turning up on time and preserving the good name of the Grosvenor. Later we gave charity shows. No sooner had the Steward suggested that we might give one than Tom Shelley wrote in the *Grosvenor Gazette*, 'I fully intend to run a successful concert party and to tour the hospitals.' Later some of our students had the chance to take part in youth programme radio discussions. All these extraneous activities served to give point and purpose to voice production and dramatics.

In an era when the secondary modern school has been liberated from the trammels of the examination system, we have to ask ourselves what we have put in its place. All young people are eager to find their own level; they need security as well as adventure; they ask how they stand in comparison with their

contemporaries. Many suffer from an unnecessary sense of inferiority because they have never been tested. We noted that those of our members who took two intelligence tests were eager to know their results. The old system that tied the student to the matriculation syllabus may have been cramping but we need some form of test in place of it. Those who have been put into the 'C-stream'' are apt to have an inferiority complex about it and, if they take no further test, harm may be done.

Insistence and Expectation as Forces in Education

It has been stated that in any adolescent community some allowance must be made for emotional preoccupation and emotional tension. But it must not be forgotten that every human being, however deeply involved in emotional problems, wants to be made to develop his or her other abilities. Angus was in many ways the educationalist's dream. He would become suddenly tremendously interested in some subject and work really hard to improve his technique; in his time he became engrossed in football, editing the *Grosvenor Gazette*, acting, singing and ballroom dancing. He was above the average in all he did because he worked. When his army service was over and he had ended an unhappy love affair he was for a time in a bad way. His many interests at the Grosvenor helped to tide him over this time of stress and trouble. He was highly emotional, the child of a broken home; had he not been given other interests to take his mind off his emotional disappointment, there is no knowing what might have become of him. All welfare and sympathy, and no goading into purposeful activity, can defeat the ends of welfare. That is why we always rejoiced that we were part of the education service which made sufficient explicit demands to prevent us being left to wallow in welfare alone. All young people need to be made to use their latent ability. Unfortunately their elders do not set them a good example, for we all tend to take the easy way; we are too busy to write that letter; we have no time for reading; how can we blame the adolescent for cutting our class to see a film about prehistoric man?

Simple Imperatives and Understandable Aims

In the beginning all constructive effort must be directed to an end acceptable to the adolescent. Later, for certain temperaments, skill may bring its own satisfactions and learning its own reward. More than once we have suggested that a youth centre should aim at having in some degree the life and variety of a junior university. Certainly the provision of many extraneous activities, cultural, social and athletic, are common needs. Miscellaneous lectures on a wide range of subjects are an aspect of university life that can usefully be copied by youth units. Even those in the centre who do not attend the lecture gain in awareness from it; it becomes a subject they have heard of.

But the parallel cannot be carried too far. With many young wage-earners culture cannot be just offered and the youngster left to take it or leave it. If this method is adopted he or she will almost invariably leave it. Having been induced to accept coaching for recreative pursuits such as table tennis or ballroom dancing, the youngster must be led to make fresh efforts to acquire other new skills and preserve skills already acquired. It is easier to do this in a place where he has already grown to enjoy the life and variety offered. Bertha in discussing educational summer camps said that if there were plenty of freedom in a camp she would be willing to engage in morning classes to pay for free afternoons and evenings—'a favour for a favour'. The young have a sense of fair play. They will put up with the pain of being educated if the place they voluntarily attend has sufficient colour and interest to make it worth their while to accept a few rules and obligations. Such rules have to be applied with discretion and occasionally relaxed in the case of those who are not yet ready for this particular discipline. If a restless and neurotic boy or girl is to be welded into a community as an alternative to drifting into delinquency, some rules have to be waived during their preliminary training. Those fortunate enough to be less neurotic have to be prodded into effort. Those who have found the limelight in some sphere of effort need to be led to develop other sides of their personality. Success is exhilarating but so is fresh effort. Youngsters should never be allowed to rest on their laurels.

Size of Youth Unit

The need for wide choice of activity and variety of programme as well as for a high quality of instruction even for the most retarded student raises the question of the ideal size of youth units. We found 300–400 a convenient size, with an average nightly attendance of 150. This meant that the building seemed full and lively all the time so that the youngsters felt they belonged to a going concern. A success story is necessary if members are to feel secure, and numbers spell success. The young are quick to quit what they think is a sinking ship.

With a fairly large attendance it is possible to have several classes per night and to justify the expense involved. We had three halls at our disposal so that there was room to run Judo, table tennis and square dancing all at the same time, as well as art and other more sedentary subjects in class rooms. We often realised the disadvantages of sharing a building with two day-schools for younger children; we should have liked a canteen equipped for the purpose rather than a classroom with a sink in it. We should have liked common rooms. But if to acquire such amenities we had been offered a building with fewer halls and less space to spread as activities multiplied, we would have chosen the older building.

Publicity and Salesmanship

Our sports organiser, W. Hughes, was a publicity man by day; he could do good notices of activities in clear lettering and witty phrase on blackboards. For this he was held in great respect. He applied advertising techniques to education with much success. If a varied programme is offered and if the humdrum of class work is enlivened with displays, shows and competitions, life in an institute becomes less boring. A subject that sounds dull must be 'sold' with colour. All the work a youngster does needs to be noticed, discussed and displayed so that it becomes plain that effort is valued by those who encourage it. Instructors themselves need to be 'sold' to the young; the young must realise that those who seek to teach them are, in fact, highly qualified. In this way they grow to see the meaning and value of training and qualification.

Odd Men Out

The price of a successful social and athletic programme may be that a few quite talented individuals are left out or even frustrated. We noted that Owen found something wanting in the hearty atmosphere of Judo and sport created in the early days. When a dramatic society and a brains trust were started Owen found a balanced programme in place of one where gymnastics had figured alone. For others none of the subjects offered in our time table had an appeal.

It was often possible in the course of conversation to discover an interest and to help these odd men out to follow it by giving them books to read or sending them out to find material for study. Time has to be spared, even on busy nights when classes go well, to see that the odd man out has just the right book, or something that can justify his spending some hours in the centre. These odd ones are as important as those who conveniently fit into the existing curriculum. A friendly inspector told a cautionary tale about a youth unit that started and ran for a time a highly successful dramatic society. This society grew and grew at the expense of the rest of the activities until at last the unit died round the dramatic society. This is a danger that has to be watched. Individuals and their development are always more important than schemes of studies and one-sided success. To one who runs an art group it will be inconvenient when a star student gives up art for Judo or singing. But for the youngster's all-round education it may be better for him to acquire a certain skill in several subjects rather than concentrate only on one. It is human for all of us to want those activities for which we are responsible to succeed. Once a display or a stage show is imminent, it is essential that it should succeed so that those taking part feel justified. If a youngster lets the group down, a substitute must be put in so that the show goes on. But when the play or display is over, it may be necessary for some of those who played leading parts to pass on to other fields of activity. Simon never forgot a timely suggestion from the Baron that he needed to balance snooker-playing with some more solid activity. His interests consistently widened with the years, and he pursued a varied course of studies, suddenly dropping one not from lack of interest but in order to have time to do something else.

Learning through Experience

In a short story by Sartre a daughter has not taken her parents' advice and her life is heading for tragedy. Her mother says, 'What I find fantastic is that we her parents have not the right to protect her from herself.' Their exasperation has to be shared by all responsible for the training and welfare of young people. For it seems a stern and irreducible fact that adolescents learn mainly through their own experience. Advice from the adult, however kindly meant, is ignored and sad mistakes are made; human beings learn more from their own mistakes than from advice or exhortation.

Education has therefore to present every individual with multitudinous opportunities to gain experience and learn from such experience. Help and advice have a place but they can best be given about a living situation by a sensitive opportunist. Severe criticism of an unsuccessful method of coping with a situation can be given when the failure is being discussed in a friendly way. While we have to point out to the young as many of the possibilities of life as we can, no amount of advice can take the place of personal and often painful experience. Harry Daniels had a very bad time with his football team in mid-season and they nearly withdrew from a league because of personal difficulties. He confessed that he learned more from this near-failure than from his many successful seasons. But it is not only the natural leaders who need opportunites to try out ways and means of managing a situation, it is every individual in the community.

Spreading Opportunities for Achievement

It is simple to ensure that some talented leading personalities have sufficient scope to practise skills and develop latent talent. What we have to discover are ways and means of giving practice in living to the quiet type that tends to shun the limelight and hover on the fringe. The leaders need scope and encouragement but not at the expense of the mass. At 15 it is too early to say that any young person is not worth further education. Even the least promising have to be helped to realise themselves as self-respecting individuals capable of acquiring some skill and having some understanding and control over their own emo-

tions. We tried getting as many persons as possible to write for the *Grosvenor Gazette.* Those who had a literary bent were encouraged to write regularly but we always asked a different person to report on class activities for each issue. We never had a refusal; if they said they were bad spellers or writers they were told that their article would be typed for them. The rush to see themselves in cyclo-styled print had to be seen to be believed. Arthur, who was a semi-literate good talker, once described a drive to Canterbury as van-driver's mate. He would not write an article but he consented to dictate to the Steward. He went straight on, pausing at times for a word and often making a perfect choice. At the close he said, 'I have got to get in the sun setting over the hopfields . . . and then we come to the noise of the traffic so different from the song of the birds.' The outwardly less facile and gifted need scope for expression and for that sense of wellbeing that comes after any creative effort.

Study and Development

We had always realised the need to encourage our students to read and write more but, as we proceeded, it became clear that this in itself was not enough. General education classes were added to the curriculum. These classes aimed at educating in literacy the backward readers; helping those whose composition and spelling were weak; and giving practice to those of higher literacy and intelligence and encouraging them in study by a simple tutorial system.

Even in such classes as educational films, where the tendency was for them to accept education as something quite incidental, we felt the need for a more positive approach. Written work on the content of the films was introduced and such testing proved popular.

Below is our time table for 1954–55. All classes added since 1948 have been asterisked to show the increasingly intellectual content of our programme. Attendance was not decreased by this trend. Members in whom we had awakened interests which had been pursued in the Forces, returning on demobilisation, often found what we had to offer stimulating. This was probably due to the fact that our standards had been consistently

rising during their absence. All classes listed below were open to both sexes unless otherwise stated.

Time Table

Monday	Physical training and gymnastics (boys); table tennis coaching; drama which included Shakespearian studies*; craft work; general education.*
Tuesday	Judo (girls)*; elocution*; singing, individual voice training and chorus work; art, drawing and painting and art appreciation; social studies, i.e. Brains Trust.
Wednesday	Football training on a floodlit pitch; square dancing*; lectures both a series on general subjects and short courses*; general education advanced level, i.e. working at school subjects.*
Thursday	Judo (boys and young men); boxing (boys); films and general knowledge; cookery; piano playing.*
Friday	Boxing (boys); ballroom dancing for beginners and advanced level students; pottery and claymodelling and sculpture appreciation; musical appreciation by participation*; general education, i.e. part time given to beginners and later tutorials for advanced level.*

This time table was supplemented in 1954 by residential week-end courses, as an experiment, with promising results. If such a scheme of study as this could be allied to vocational training, by some means, further education at this stage could become more of a living whole.

Present Needs and Future Prospects

Nothing that we have advocated in these pages is either new or original and many of these methods have been tried before. In the good home the youngster is stimulated by the personal interest that is taken in all he does and the salutary prodding that keeps him at work. At puberty the desire for adult status weakens for a time the influence of parents. At this stage more than any other, perhaps, even the good home needs supplementing by understanding tutors and superiors at work.

Certainly the achievements of the English public school system suggest that a good home can be supplemented by imaginative schoolmasters. With resident pupils the influence of such schoolmasters permeates not only the academic and athletic development of each pupil but his leisure-time pursuits. In our modern cities, where the dormitory suburb has taken the place of neighbourly living, the out-of-school influence of schools and teachers has been minimised. Education has become a matter of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with week-ends left free for mechanised amusements in place of creative hobbies and the whole process has lost richness and a certain ritual which all human beings need.

The hope for the mass of adolescent school-leavers would have been the county college had the need for economy not supervened before the 1944 Act was made effective. The county college, by a combination of compulsory day attendance and voluntary evening attendance, would have catered for the years when skills acquired need use and practice. It would have provided informal education and social facilities where a personal interest could have been shown in individuals. Above all, as part of the compulsory system, it would have had an opportunity to show the value of cultural as well as vocational training to a wider public. In the interval before county colleges are established, we have a chance to experiment so that when they come, less time will be wasted by the need for initial experiment.

Assessment of Results

In education and welfare the assessment of results is difficult. There has been little consistent follow-up work to test the success of varying techniques. What time-limit are we to put upon success? Are we to try to discover how many former members of an institute or youth centre are influenced to visit an art gallery or read a text book fifteen years after they have left? Or are we to estimate success in a matter of two or three years? Should we end with Tom Shelley as we began with him and quote his letter from an R.A.F. camp: 'The Grosvenor, I hear, is throbbing with life as usual. I wish I was there amongst old friends. The place became a habit with me and there is an atmosphere there that is hard to find anywhere else. . . .' This was a tribute from one whom we had constantly told that he had done well but

should work a great deal harder and so acquire real skill; after each successful musical show he was sent a list of criticisms slightly longer than the list of good points. For afterwards, in the world, who has time to give constructive criticism born of faith in the capacity of the individual? The long-term results of any educational technique are hard to assess but this is a matter that would repay research.

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